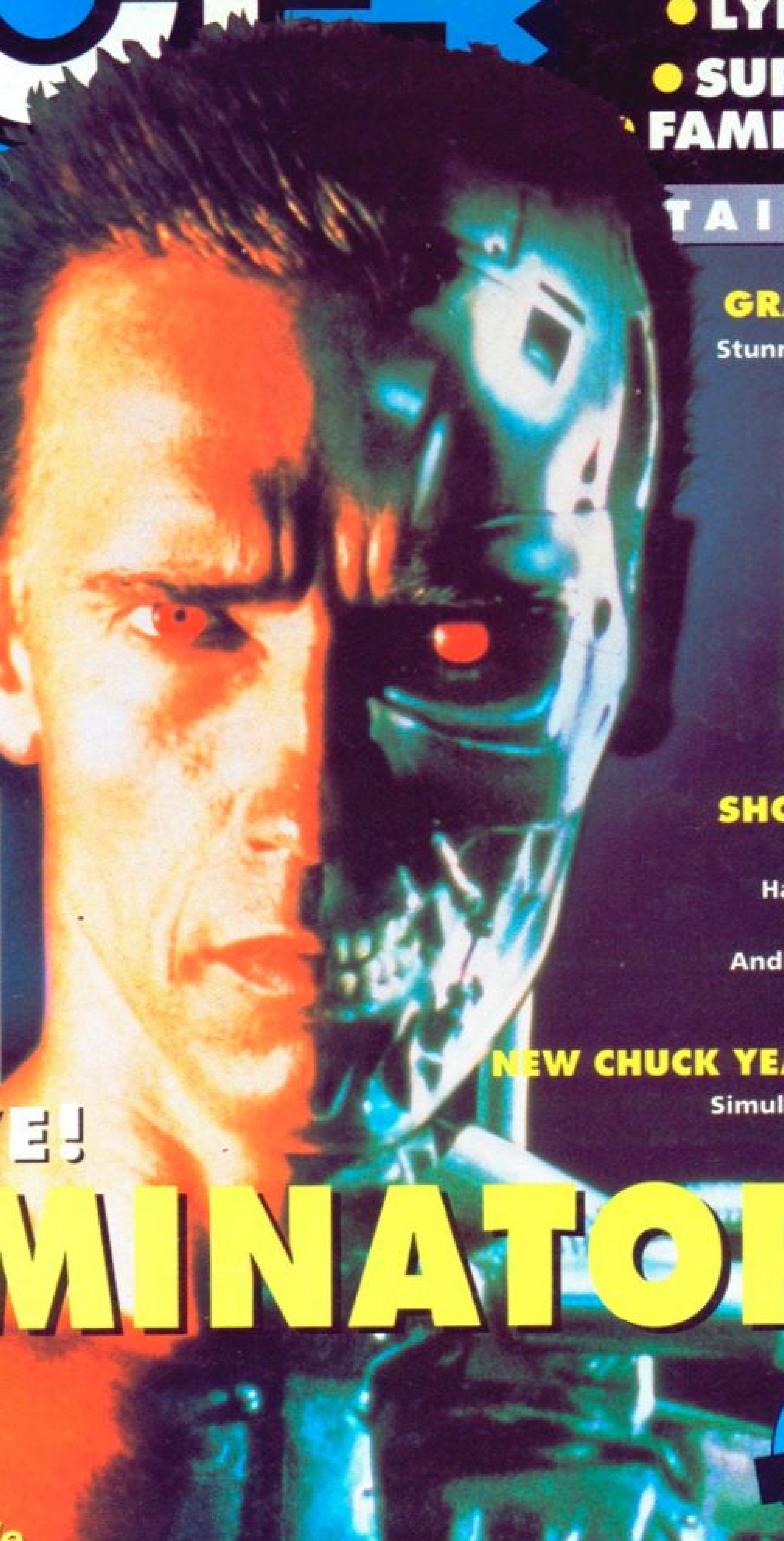
No 47 AUGUST 1991 £1.80

# ACE

ADVANCED TAINMENT

- AMIGA
- PC
- ST
- MEGADRIVE
- GAMEBOY
- LYNX
- SUPER FAMICOM



## GRAPHIC SEX!

Stunning images from the '92 Olympics

THE ROCKETEER

## AMERICAN SHOW REPORT

Rocketeer
Hare Raising Havoc
LarryLand
And...The Adventures of Willy Beamish

## NEW CHUCK YEAGER ON PC

Simulator depth meets arcade action!

TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY
ocean

## EXCLUSIVE!

# TERMINATOR 2

- The Software!
- The Story!
- The Stunts!

*5-Page Report Inside*

**PLUS 30 PAGES**
Of Bargains in the Pink Pages

**NEWEST GAMES FOR *YOUR* MACHINE PREVIEWED AND REVIEWED:** TERMINATOR 2, FLAG, RETRO, SONIC THE HEDGEHOG, CHUCK YEAGER, MARTIAN DREAMS, PREHISTORIK, GHOST BATTLE, MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE, CASTLE OF ILLUSION, SUPER PRO BASKETBALL, FRENETIC, BEAST BUSTERS, F-14 TOMCAT, CHAMPION OF THE RAJ, AND MANY MORE!

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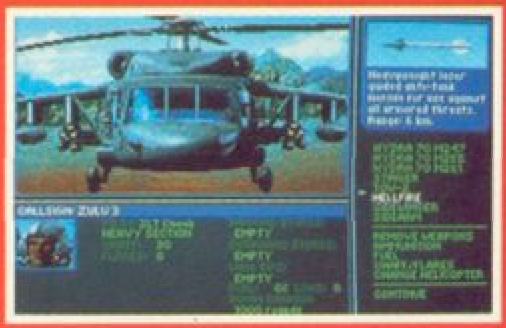
# GUNSHIP 2000™

In 1986, MicroProse released Gunship, an Apache AH-64A attack helicopter simulation which sold copy after copy and won award after award. It was hailed as the definitive chopper simulation.

Five years later, after the success of Operation Desert Storm, MicroProse present Gunship 2000. High-tech air supremacy provided unmatchable military power. Now high-tech computer technology provides the untouchable chopper simulation.

# Tomorrow's Technology Today

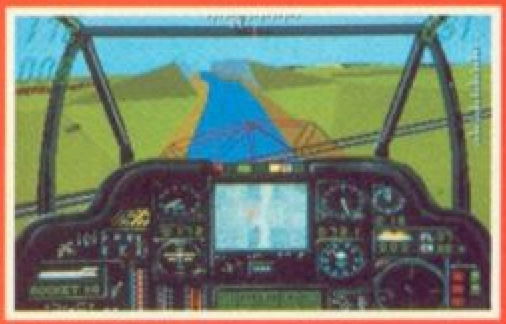
Gunship 2000 simulates an amazing seven of the US Army's most technologically advanced rotor craft. For each of hundreds of different missions the player considers the special capabilities of each helicopter type and selects a squad of five ships, and then designates state-of-the-art weaponry to each chopper. Its the first multi-copter simulation ever to reach the mass market.



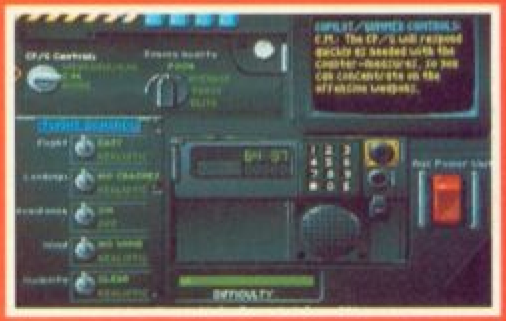
The action takes place in Central Europe and the Persian Gulf, each theatre containing three different arenas. Your crew members will increase in skill over time; your job is to make the best use of each crew member's abilities and to oversee and coordinate the battle tactics of the squad.

INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING

Topographical 3-D graphics show terrains with depressions, such as river banks and valleys, and elevations, like mountains and ridges, making low-altitude flight stunningly realistic. Each helicopter looks and handles just like the real thing.



There are a multitude of game options to choose from; training, single, and multiple helicopter missions, a campaign game, and in flight options allowing realistic or easy flight, landings, weather, and variable wind conditions.



A huge range of views allow you to see action from anywhere within the theatre of conflict. From within the cockpit you can see ahead, left and right, or you can watch from the top of the rotor shaft, via chase view, tacti-view, remote camera, 360° panorama, or ride-the-missile view.

With the added ability to call in artillery and fixed wing support when its available and needed, and a mission builder for designing and saving your own missions, Gunship 2000 offers you the complete state-of-the-art simulation of a frontline battlefield.

MICROPROSE™
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

**Gunship 2000 will be available soon for IBM PC compatibles**

47

"You're not a man, you're a machine."

*George Bernard Shaw's embarassing outburst in his local fleapit showing an early copy of The Terminator.*

# reviews

**All the reviews fit to print...**

## ON COMPUTER AND CONSOLE *pages 53 - 82*

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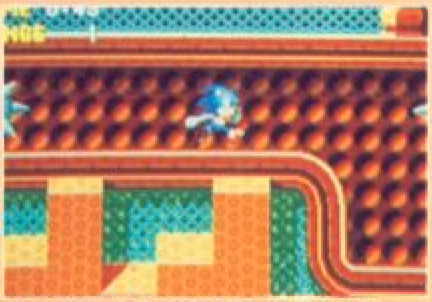
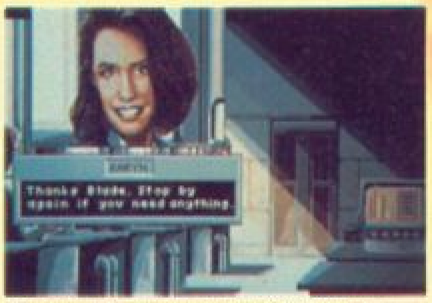


**Meet *Sonic The Hedgehog*, Sega's answer to Mario. He jumps! He runs! He rolls around! Can Megadrive owners finally flummox Famicom fans? See page 54**

***Digital Pictures* reckon they can produce photo-realistic films incorporating non-human elements using computers alone. See for yourself on P.28**



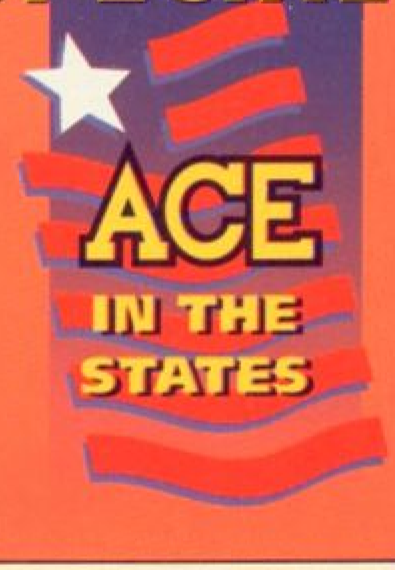
***Disney* and *Dynamix* are two of the foremost American software producers. View their new' wares on page 24.**

## STATESIDE SPECIAL

**The Summer Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago is so enormous, it makes the Ideal Home Exhibition look like a car-boot sale. Sprawling over three gigantic buildings in the centre of town and a host of hotel suites and reception halls around the city, the event covers everything electronic you could possibly want in your home, including, of course, the latest games.**

**But where were all the new releases? Why was there no new software for the official US Famicom launch?**

**However, for those careful enough to look, some potential software gems were lurking amongst the fish-phones and novelty hand-buzzers.**



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EMAP IMAGES
Priory Court
30-32 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU
Tel: 071-251 6222
Fax: 071-490 1094

**EDITOR** Jim Douglas
**DEPUTY EDITOR** David Upchurch
**ART EDITOR** Jim Willis
**DESIGNER** Jenny Abrook
**CONSULTANT EDITOR** Steve Cooke
**STAFF WRITER** Gary Whitta
**CONTRIBUTORS** Rik Haynes, Christina Erskine, Chris Jenkins, Russel Patient, Mark Smiddy.
**PHOTOGRAPHY** Edward Park
**ADVERTISING MANAGER** Jo Cooke
**SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVE** Tina Zanelli
**ADVERTISING PRODUCTION** Melanie Costin
**PUBLISHER** Garry Williams
**SUBSCRIPTIONS**
Apex House, Oundle Road
Peterborough, PE2 9NP
0733 898100
**COLOUR ORIGINATION**
Proprint Repro, Barking Road, E13
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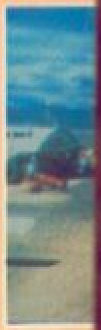

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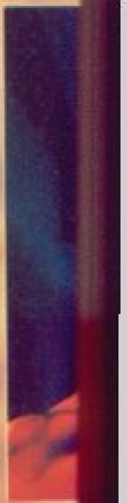

## COV

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## THE BIG PICTURE

**There can be little doubt that *Terminator 2* will be *the* movie event of the year. The quality of the film almost seems to have become a side issue, since everyone seems preoccupied with the dollars (One hundred million of them, in fact) it cost to make, the dollars it *will* make and the allegedly phenomenal special effects. However, we at ACE know that the movie, not the money, is most important. And we've obtained exclusive pictures of both the film and the forthcoming Ocean game, full details of the storyline and details of the incredible antics of Arnold's new adversary.**

**And of course, there's around 50 pages of games information, six pages of news and a report from the Chicago CES.**

***The Rocketeer* is Disney Software's major assault on the higher-end of movie licence work. It makes up a vital element in the new range of software from the animation movie company. Read more on page 22.**

# features

19 **ACE IN THE STATES**
The Summer CES was a mixed bag of software, hardware, novelties and surprises. Our 7-page report has all the highlights. Including:

19 **ROUNDUP**
Steve Cooke's overview of the show is packed with all the news of signings, deals new product and gossip.

22 **THE ODD COUPLE**
Dynamix, producers of high-end interactive fiction for the masses and Disney, producers of platform games and early learning programs may appear to have extremely little in common, but their new product lines would suggest a similarity in thinking...

24 **HIGH SIERRA**
The folks behind the *King's Quest* games talk to Steve Cooke about their future plans.

28 **GRAPHIC SEX!**
In the second in an occasional series, we unashamedly print a bunch of breathtaking comp. generated graphics with no justification at all except their visual appeal.

32 **TERMINATOR 2**
He said he'd be back, and now he IS! As Schwarzenegger reprises he role as the most *rock 'ard* cyborg on the planet, development teams across the country are breaking their backs to finish various computer incarnations of this blockbusting movie conversion. What can we expect?

39 **IN THE WORKS**
8 Pages of analytical examinations of game-premises and programming routines or an excuse to print some early information about a game before anyone else? You decide. This month:
- Flag
- Retro
- Outrun Europa

## REGULARS

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88 **NEXT MONTH**

### COMING ATTRACTIONS!

A new feature joins ACE this month.
In The Works offers depthy pre-release information of games currently in development. This month we've got information on *Flag*, *Retro* and *Outrun Europa*

And it begins on page 39

Get ready for a surprise!

**AUGUST 1991**

## COVER STORY

**It's been seven years since *The Terminator* first appeared, establishing himself as *the* cinematic action bad guy of all time. The toughest, most ruthless, deadly and remorseless killing machine ever committed to celluloid instantly took a place in all sci-fi fans hearts. And now he's BACK!**

***Terminator 2* is the most expensive film *ever*. It's also arguably the most eagerly awaited sequel *ever*.**

**Read all about the movie and Ocean's game in our 5-page special, beginning on page 32**

# Win a GAME GEAR The Sega Sensation!

SEGA
GAME GEAR
PORTABLE VIDEO GAME SYSTEM
GAME GEAR
SEGA

The Sega Game Gear is the latest hand-held sensation to come out of Japan, and you could be one of the first in your neighbourhood to get your hands on it as we're giving one away! We'll bung in a free game too! So...

## Call 0898 299225

# Win a SUPER FAMICOM!

Nintendo
SUPER FAMICOM
SUPER MARIO WORLD

The Nintendo Super Famicom is probably the most eagerly awaited new console to hit the streets ever! We've got our hands on one, and as much as we'd like to keep it ourselves we'll be giving it away along with a Commodore monitor and the brilliant game "Super MarioWorld"! So if you'd like this lot heading in your direction sometime soon, give the number below a call right away!!

## 0898 299273

Calls cost 34p (cheap rate) and 45p (at all other times) per minute including VAT.
Populuxe, PO Box 2065, London, W12 9JH

# Pocket a Pool Table!

If you fancy being the ace pool player on your block, what better way to do it than by winning this Thurston League Pool Table? We'll deliver it to you, and it comes with everything you'll need!!

## Phone 0898 299 287

# Win an AMIGA System!

Who could say no to winning an Amiga 500 with a colour monitor, a colour printer and 12 fantastic free game?! Nobody. So what are you waiting for?!!

## Call 0898 299233 Now!

For details of winners please send a SAE marked "Winners List" to the address shown. If you do not pay the bill please ask permission before you call as the average length of call is 5.5 minutes.

# NEWS GAMES

*Adventurous archaeologists will soon have the chance to live out their fantasies when US Gold finishes the Megadrive adaption of* Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade. *Additionally, USG is developing* Leaderboard *and* Godfather *on Britain's most popular 16-bit console system. A second Indy title is also on the cards.* Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis *should be here in early 1992.*

**Rik Haynes asks Stormin' Norman for his tips to *Super Mario Bros...***

## Strike Commander

Will combat flight simulators ever be the same again? The claims are big for the next release from the creators of *Wing Commander.* Origin states *Strike Commander* incorporates the most powerful 3D graphics system ever written for a PC creating a fully realised cinematic world. There's no doubting the shock circulating through the PC games industry when they saw the early demo of *Strike Commander* at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago last month.

"*Strike Commander* is an entirely new form of flight simulator," says the Texas-based company, "You're thrust into an alternate reality of fractal terrain and atmospheric hazing, 3D realtime bitmapped images, texture-mapped and Gouraud-shaded polygonal objects." The question is, will the gameplay shape up as well?

Mindscape is releasing *Strike Commander* on the PC in the autumn. Don't hold your breath for the Gameboy conversion!

## Runes Of Virtue

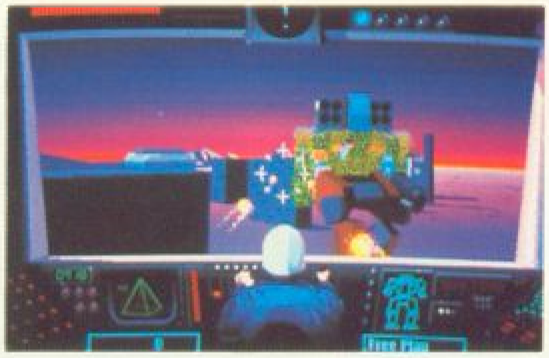
It sounds incredible but *Ultima*, the fantasy role-playing hit from Origin, has come to the Gameboy courtesy of FCI. How could they cram so much depth into a machine better known for puzzle games? Will players weaned on *Tetris* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* react favourably to the more sophisticated style of play?

*Ultima - Runes of Virtue*, a one megabit cartridge with battery back-up allowing you to save play positions, has been programmed by the designers of the original series of computer games.

Your mission is to seek the eight runes which are hidden around the dungeons in Britannia. After choosing either Mage, Bard, Fighter or Ranger, you can talk to friends to gain hints and tips to further your quest and possibly discover magic swords, potions and teleporters.

Britannia is filled with a variety of foes, too, including skeletons, bats, ghosts, dragons and the mysterious Black Knight. Will you use your masterful sword skills, throw the magic axe or employ more devious ploys to destroy these creatures?

One unique feature of *Runes of Virtue* is the use of the two-player link option. One player mode has more than 150 levels of play, while two people can explore over 80 levels which feature two types of dungeons. The players either compete against each other or work together to finish the game.



## B.O.T.S.

If you thought the coin-op version of *F-15 Strike Eagle* was impressive, wait till you play *BOTS* from Microprose. Thankfully, the second arcade video game from the makers of *Railroad Tycoon* and *Gunship* has fewer controls to master. Players travel into surreal 3D worlds and battle mechanised robots in a fearsome futuristic shoot'em-up.

If you can't afford the trip to Chicago and the world famous BattleTech Centre, this is the next best thing.

"Arcade gamers want challenge, a degree of realism, and state-of-the-art graphics and animation," speculates Microprose Games in the USA, "We're geared up to deliver just that."

Among the other Microprose arcade games in development are a 'sophisticated racing game with the most imaginative courses ever designed' and the sequel to *F-15 Strike Eagle* featuring the famous A-10 tank-buster combat jet allowing you to take on heavily armed ground forces around the world.

A source close to the company said Microprose is considering converting *BOTS* to home formats sometime next year. Keep yer fingers crossed...

## Super Mario Goes CD-I

There's no stopping the Nintendo and Philips rollercoaster at the moment. After the shock announcement that Philips and Nintendo are getting together to produce CD-ROM/XA hardware and software for the Super NES console (see Tech News), comes yet another startling deal whereby famous Nintendo characters are being licensed to American Interactive Media, the software publishing subsidiary of Philips and Polygram.

*Super Mario, Princess Zelda, Link* and *Donkey Kong* – some of America's most recognised video game characters – will soon been appearing on the Compact Disc Interactive format due for a European launch this time next year.

AIM will be developing and marketing an unspecified number of CD-I titles featuring these popular Nintendo characters.

"CD-I technology will bring a level of interaction and realistic gameplay with titles featuring the Nintendo characters, never previously experienced by Nintendo fans," predicts Bernie Luskin, president of AIM, "They will further increase the appeal of our product line."

# The Resurrected

**Following the success of our Cannes article in the last issue, ACE hopes to bring you regular news of movies which could be licensed into computer and console games. And why not indeed? This month we uncover the latest movie to be based on an H. P. Lovecraft novel.**

***The Resurrected*** **is an attempt to produce a more complex chiller than your average slasher flick promises Scotti Bros Pictures. "In a genre jammed with chain-saw lugging oafs, pin-cushioned demons and mental defectives in hockey masks, the classic horror film has been all but lost in a melee of slicing and dicing."**

**Based on the Lovecraft story, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, The Resurrected* deals with the an age-old quest - the desire for immortality. A scientist becomes obsessed with his ancestors 18th century experiment to reanimate the dead. Sounds familiar, don't you think? Needless to say, this fascination triggers a terrifying and gruesome chain of events.**

***The Resurrected*** **has been directed by Dan O'Bannon, one of Hollywood's most respected screenwriters who created *Alien* and *Total Recall*. He also wrote and directed the cult horror hit, *Return of the Living Dead*. The special effects and make-up were in the capable hands of Todd Masters who worked on *Predator, Robocop II, The Return of the Swamp Thing* and *Look Who's Talking*.**

**"I think it's been an awfully long time since there's been a horror movie that's a good solid yarn for adults to enjoy," says director O'Bannon. Will audiences agree or is *The Resurrected* destined for a late night showing on satellite TV?**

*Those dastardly Space* Invaders *are back. Only this time you could earn £20 by blasting 'em to bits on a new payout coin-op, appropriately titled* Prize Space Invaders, *from BWB.*

*For monstrous multimedia merriment check out the* Locomotive Driver's Training Simulator *developed for British Rail using DVI (Digital Video Interactive) technology.*

**(Above) The final and fatal reversal of Joseph Curwen's borrowed life in this century.**

**(Left) One of the victims of an unknown attacker.**

**(Far left) Joseph Curwen (played by Chris Sarandon) takes Claire Ward (Jane Sibbett) hostage in an attempt to get away from the police and the insane asylum attendants.**

**The Ward farmhouse in Pawtuxet valley to where Charles Dexter Ward moves his laboratory and where his ancestor, Joseph Curwen had conducted his secret experiments in the 18th century.**

**(Below) In an 18th century flashback, one of Joseph Curwen's mistakes is dragged from the river by townspeople alarmed at his black magic experiments.**

**Joseph Curwen looks over in terror when he realises that John March has figured out the key to his experiments, which leads to the destruction of Joseph Curwen.**

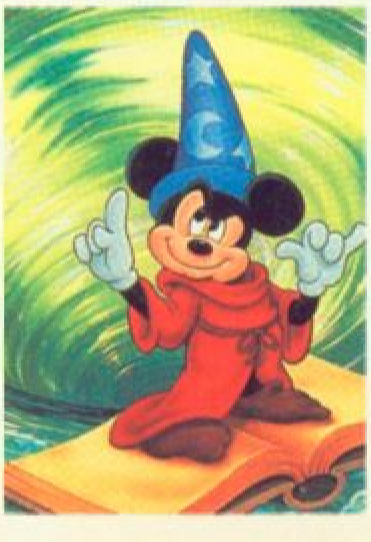
## Cinemattractions

*Spartacus*, the timeless gladiator movie starring Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis, has been fully restored and shown in multiplex cinemas across North America. Anthony Hopkins, enjoying fantastic success with his role in the chilling *Silence of the Lambs*, dubbed the voice of the late Laurence Olivier • Trekkies are in for a treat this summer when *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* hits the screens. The movie coincides nicely with the 25th anniversary of the original television show. • Interplay, creator of the *Bard's Tale* and *Battlechess* computer games, is putting the finishing touches to special *Star Trek* games for the PC, NES and Gameboy • Also on the sci-fi trail comes *Freejack* starring Emilio Estevez, Anthony Hopkins and Mick Jagger • Will Ocean pickup the rights to *Batman II?* The sequel starts shooting in September and again stars Michael Keaton as the Caped Crusader with Danny DeVito playing the villainous Penguin. The character Vicki Vale, originally starring Kim Basinger, has been left out along with Jack Nicholson's Joker. There could be a surprising choice of actor to play Robin...

# Fantasia

Fresh from his impressive performance in *Castle of Illusion*, Mickey Mouse is plunging into another Sega Megadrive arcade adventure.

This time our favourite rodent is recreating his starring role as the Sorcerer's Apprentice from the animated Disney classic, *Fantasia*.



The game features the sounds and characters from the original movie including the dancing mushrooms, sugar plum fairies and waywood brooms.

"*Fantasia* fills your screen with rich colour and animation," the company continues, "The foreground art is layered with detailed mid- and backgrounds for a lush, spellbinding 3D effect that is fascinating to watch. Don't miss this video game landmark."

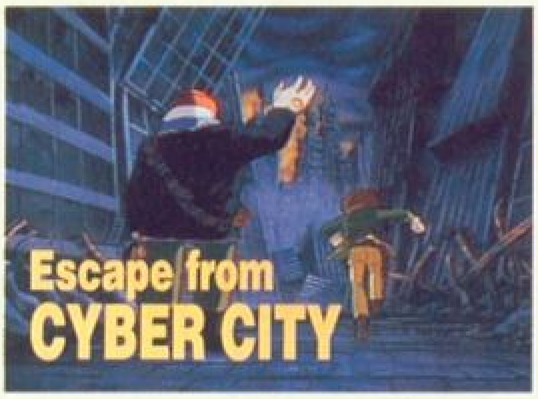
## Eye Of The Storm

**Has every games programmer gone Gouraud mad? Over the coming months, gameplayers will enjoy this refined 3D graphics technique in *Strike Commander* (Origin/Mindscape), *Cyber Fight* (Electronic Arts) and *Eye of the Storm* (Empire).**

**All this light source illumination and depth cuing is very confusing. Over to the techheads at Empire for an explanation: "Gouraud shading increases the realism of a scene using a linear interpellation technique which averages colours upon the faces of a shape. This blurs the boundaries between polygons and gives the shape a smoother appearance. The technique was described by H. Gouraud in 'Computer Display of Curved Surfaces' published twenty years ago by the University of Utah, USA."**

**What about the game, itself? *Eye of the Storm* is a strategy game set many years from now in the hostile gaseous atmosphere of Jupiter. You're sent out on a kill or be killed mission to film the activity of the lawfree zones for the network back on Earth. Sort of like an interstellar upgrade of ITN.**

## Escape From Cyber City



**The first generation of CD-I games have started to appear, and, apart from The Palm Springs Open live-action golf simulation, *Escape from Cyber City* is the most stirring example of this new genre.**

**Similar to the *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* style of laserdisc gaming, you control a cyberpunk kid through the streets of some sci-fi city filled with crooks and creeps. Make the right moves and you could earn yourself a ride on a jet-powered skateboard. Suckers simply eat dirt in the gutter. The gameplay may be simple but the animation, soundtrack and speech are all outstanding. With more software of this audio visual quality, CD-I will leave the rival CDTV system standing.**

*What game collection could be complete without the* Space Harrier? *Later this year, Sega Gamegear owners will be able to join-in on the fun and save Fantasyland from space phantoms, multi-headed reptiles and freaky flora.*

# Their Finest Missions

Since the release of *Their Finest Hour: The Battle of Britain* historic air-combat simulation, dedicated players have been forced to create their own custom missions using the built-in Mission Builder. Now Lucasfilm Games and US Gold have brought out a unique selection of their favourite missions in an add-on datadisk, aptly named, *Their Finest Missions*.

"*Their Finest Missions* challenges even the most skilled computer pilots," assures Lucasfilm Games, "And for the truly daring we've also included game designer Larry Holland's own mission, Suicide."

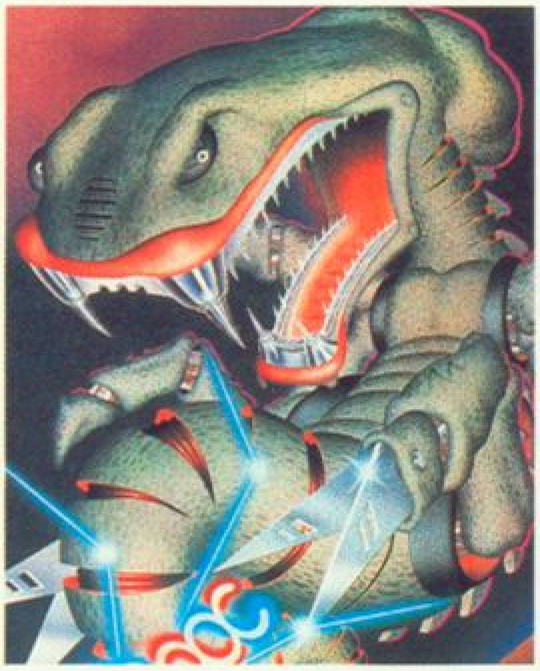
Suicide places you in immediate peril as your BF110, ordered to bomb and strafe the Dover CHL radar station, is surrounded by six top ace Spitfire MK2s. How would you get out of this little situation?

# Super R-Type

Prepare yourself for a turbocharged version of the popular shoot-'em-up *R-Type*, when Irem delivers *Super R-Type* on the Nintendo 16-bit entertainment system in Japan next month.

"It comes loaded with action, eye-popping graphics, brilliant colours and even dynamic stereo sound," announces Irem of America. In *Super R-Type*, star fighter R-9 is engaged in a deadly space battle against a band of mutant creatures hailing from the Bido Empire. These giant mutants are bent on the destruction of the cosmos and only *Super R-Type* can intervene.

*Super R-Type* wooed the CES crowds and quite a few cynics over on the Sega stand!



# Phalanx

**One of the best presented games in Japan at the moment is *Phalanx* for the Sharp X68000 personal computer.**

**Like many other Japanese shoot'em-ups, *Phalanx* has an impressive intro sequence to get you in the mood for the impending scrolling destruction and sprite death. Here the storyline, characters and details of your Enforcement Fighter unfold in a series of imaginative animated screens.**

**Then you're ready to kick some alien butt.**

## Super Schwarzkopf

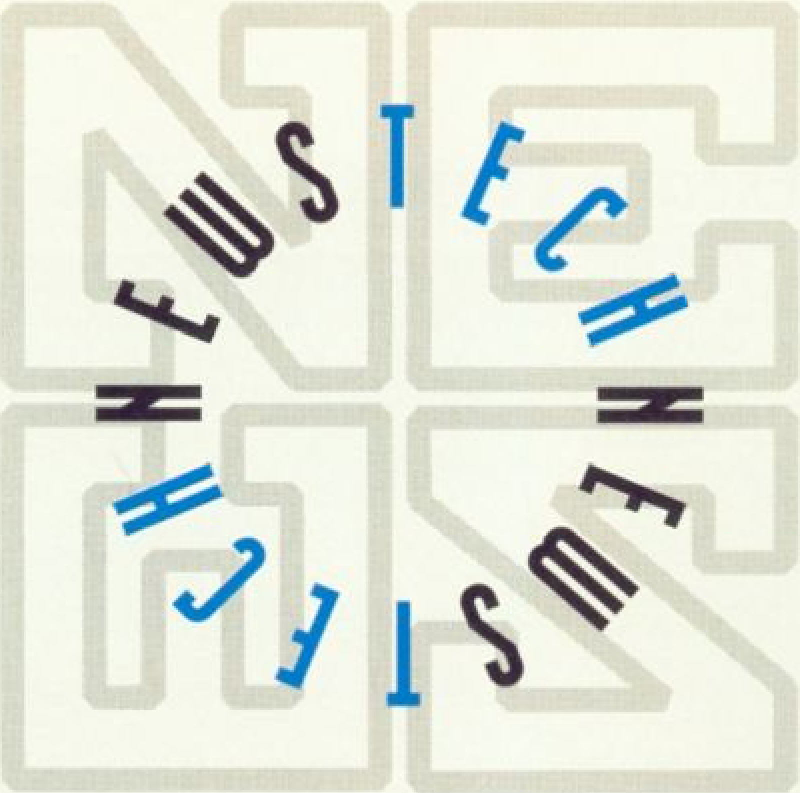
Smart weapons may have stopped Iraqi aggression in the Gulf, but video games helped the armed services fill the hours of boredom before the conflict actually commenced. And if it's good enough for his troops, General Norman Schwarzkopf apparently plays Nintendo!

ACE called and faxed the Pentagon for some secrets. Which games does Stormin' Schwarzkopf play? Does he consider himself a good gamesplayer? What's his hi-score on *Super Mario Bros*? Has he got any gameplaying tips for us? Is he thinking of upgrading to a Super NES?

Just like during the war, the top brass weren't giving the game away. A fax from United States Central Command Macdill Air Force Base in Florida, said: "General Schwarzkopf extends his regrets. He does not choose to answer your questions."

Meanwhile, Time-Warner has released an interactive multimedia magazine covering the Gulf War for the Apple Macintosh.

*Desert Storm: The First Draft of History* includes correspondents' reports, eyewitness accounts, photos, audio recordings, maps, charts, research and key documents gathered by Time magazine journalists during the conflict in the Persian Gulf. The software includes a lot of previously unpublished material. A PC version is planned.



*For all you pixel pervies out there, After Twelve, an Edinburgh-based publisher of video films is planning to launch Britain's first soft porn satellite TV channel. In response, veteran campaigner Mary Whitehouse is already organising a Home Office protest.*

**As Sony demonstrates a portable CD-I player, Rik Haynes goes dream walking with the world's first sleep sensor...**

## Super NES Arrives

**The UK launch of *Super Mario World* gets closer as Nintendo unveils the Super Famicom video game console in the US. Renamed the Super NES, it will be available from late summer for $199.95 which includes the control deck, two controllers and a copy of *Mario*.**

**Many believe the European version of the Super NES will arrive sometime in 1993. Nintendo is projecting sales of two million Super NES console systems and six million software units during 1991 in the USA.**

**Nintendo of America INC>**

**Super NES boasts some impressive technical specifications including digital stereo sound from eight sound channels, four layers of scrolling and a 32,768 colour palette.**

**Nintendo expects 18 games to be available for the Super NES by the year-end, including SimCity, F-Zero, Pilotwings, Zelda III and Super Play Action Football. It's doubtful whether Japanese carts will be compatible.**

**The first shots in the great Nintendo Super NES versus Sega Genesis (Megadrive) console battle have already been fired in the USA. Both companies used the CES trade event in Chicago to showcase their latest wares on the two systems. Sega even went so far to display *Sonic the Hedgehog*, generally regarded as the best Megadrive game to date, next to *Super Mario World* and asked gamers which one they thought was the best! This is only the start...**

### CONSOLE COMPARISON CHART *

| | NES | PC ENGINE | MEGADRIVE | SUPER NES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CPU | 8-bit | 8-bit | 16-bit | 16-bit |
| RAM | 2K | 8K | 72K | 128K |
| VIDEO RAM | 2K | 64K | 64K | 64K |
| PPU | 8-bit | 16-bit | 16-bit | 16-bit |
| COLOURS DISPLAYED | 16 | 216 | 16 | 256 |
| COLOURS AVAILABLE | 52 | 512 | 512 | 32,768 |
| RESOLUTION | 256x240 | 256x216 | 320x224 | 512x448 |
| MAX. SPRITES # | 64 | 64 | 80 | 128 |
| MAX. SPRITES/LINE | 8 | 20 | N/A | 128 |
| MAX. SPRITE SIZE | 8x8 | 32x32 | N/A | 128x128 |
| MIN. SPRITE SIZE | 8x8 | 16x16 | N/A | 8x8 |
| SCROLLING | 2Hz, Vt | N/A | N/A | 4Hz, Vt, Diag. |
| SOFTWARE RAM | Yes | N/A | N/A | Yes |
| HARDWARE MODES | - | N/A | N/A | Rotation, Scaling, Colour layering 8-bit |

*Source: Nintendo

Picture courtesy of Computer Trade Weekly

## CD Confusion

Despite leaks of a different deal, Philips and Nintendo are getting together to develop and market CD-ROM hardware and software for the Super Famicom (Super NES) console.

According to Nintendo, the new CD video games will be played on a low cost CD-ROM/XA Compact Disc player (following the XA/CD-I bridge concept). Hiroshi Yamauchi, President of Nintendo, has stated that his company will work closely with Philips in developing Nintendo CD-based games.

"The chosen application format assures the compatibility with CD-I players as well," Philips reveals. Nintendo adds: "We have been discussing the development of CD-I software titles for some time. Recently, we began discussing the development of a unique application format for play of compact discs on our 16-bit hardware system."

Nintendo plans to introduce this CD hardware and software in Japan and North America in the fourth quarter of 1992. The firm has not yet established a price for the player or games.

At the same time, Sega has unveiled an add-on CD-ROM drive for the Megadrive console at a recent Toy Fair in Tokyo. The Mega-CD will soon be available in Japan for an expected price of ¥49,000 (around £199). An early 1992 release has been set for the North American launch. We understand over 25 software companies are developing specific Mega-CD titles, though information concerning the technical specifications of the gadget are not publicly known.

European launch and price details for the Sega and Nintendo CD-ROM drives and games have yet to be announced.

The Philips/Nintendo deal has been clouded by Sony's conflicting plans to sell a system called the Play Station which can use both Super Famicom cartridges and CD-format games. Nintendo has stated that it will not be supporting Play Station, which is unlikely to be compatible with CD-ROM/XA discs.

Sony has been getting serious about compact disc and multimedia technology recently. Apart from the Data Discman portable CD-ROM player, Sony has various CD-I models in development and the $699 Laser Library, a complete CD-ROM package for PC computers supplied with six software titles and a pair of headphones. Other products are expected to be revealed later in the year.

Nobody from the companies involved in these covert negotiations were willing to comment any further as we went to press. Industry pundits have suggested the Nintendo/Philips agreement was the result of Sony's plans to launch its own console early next year. Another theory is that Sony has far more open views on publishing than Nintendo could handle. Only the top executives from Nintendo, Sony and Philips know the real reasons.

Are we seeing the beginning of a video game and multimedia merger? ACE has no doubts that we will be hearing more of these console CD machines in the coming months.

## Neo-Geo Launched In USA

With all the talk of 16-bit video game technology from Nintendo and Sega, coin-op company SNK reminded visitors to the summer CES of its 24-bit machine. The high price of Neo-Geo hardware and software wasn't made quite so clear and neither were facts concerning the worldwide sales of the system.

"The Neo-Geo targets the upscale adult market (20 to 35 year-olds) that Nintendo, Sega and NEC have overlooked," reckons SNK.

Despite incorporating the capability to produce sophisticated graphics and sound, Neo-Geo is fully compatible with its sister arcade system, the range and quality of games leave many players feeling cold. New titles like *King of the Monsters*, a wrestling game inspired by monster B-movies of bygone years, do little to change this opinion.

In North America, Neo-Geo is now available for rent in outlets like Blockbuster Video. Hardly surprising when you consider the hardware systems cost $649 with the game cartridges coming in at $199 a piece. No wonder SNK has experienced lack-lustre sales since the British introduction of Neo-Geo last September.

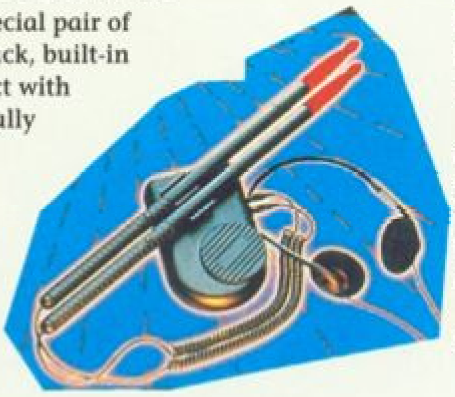
*Atari has reportedly scrapped plans to launch the Panther video games console and is working on something better instead. Insiders suggest this 64-bit machine, codenamed Jaguar, will incorporate proprietary silicon for producing coin-op style graphics and sound. Great stuff, what about the software though?*

## Druman

Have you been watching *Rockschool* on TV lately? With Design in Mind, a Californian developer of high-tech toys and gadgets, could have the perfect gift for would-be drummers.

Drum Man is a portable electronic drum kit. It comes with headphones and a special pair of drumsticks. Each time they're struck, built-in LEDs flash to acknowledge contact with the invisible drums. The result? Fully digitised sound effects for snare, bass, tom-tom or cymbals.

Drum Man is battery operated and has its own belt clip for easy carrying. For further details contact With Design in Mind on 0101-818-407-1286.



## No Rest For The Widget

Not even sleep is a safe haven from the terror of technology. Matsushita Electric Industrial, or in brandname terms Technics and Panasonic, has designed a Sleep Sensor that can be built into a mattress to monitor your every moment in slumberland.

One application of the gadget might turn your bedroom into an automated nightmare. For example, as soon as you stop counting sheep and start drifting into sleep, the parental device could turn the TV off, dim the lights and lower the temperature of your surroundings. Like the Japanese proverb goes, Beware of Concealed Circuits in Your Bedding.

ACE shudders to think of any other bed-based body movements the Sleep Sensor could be programmed to look out for...

# A New Era In Interactive Entertainment ?

CD-I has finally arrived... well, almost. Philips, or rather its American front Magnavox, used a quiet sideroom at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago to reveal the first Compact Disc Interactive player for consumers.

For those not in the know, CD-I is an exciting multimedia home entertainment system that combines compact disc-quality audio with video, text, graphic, animation and interactive capabilities.

The idea is to turn passive television viewing into an 'active and participatory experience'.

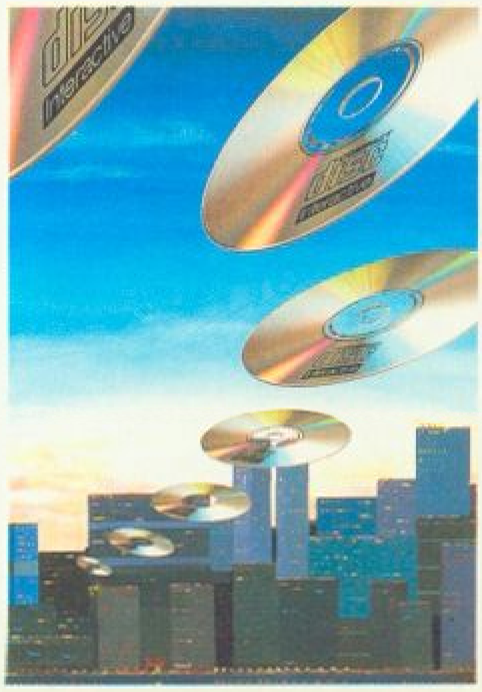
CD-I players connect to any television and stereo system, and is similar in look, design and operation to normal Audio CD players. In fact, they use special five-inch silver compact discs identical in appearance to their audio counterparts. As a bonus feature, the decks can play all CD-I, CD Digital Audio, Photo CD and CD+Graphics discs.

All major consumer electronics firms, including Sony and Matsushita (parent company of JVC, Technics and Panasonic), are also developing CD-I players.

The Magnavox CDI910 will be released in the USA and Japan later in the year. Europeans will have to wait another year to enjoy the CD-I version of Big Bird from Sesame Street. On the plus side, all the initial bugs should have been sorted before CD-I hits the sunny streets of Southend-on-Sea. Additionally, European CD-I units will include built-in full motion full screen animation capabilities based on MPEG (Motion Picture Engineering Group) specifications. Thus, CD-I titles will have the ability to mimic the TV-quality images and sounds that you're accustomed to.

American Interactive Media (AIM), the software development venture of Philips and Polygram, will launch over 50 CD-I titles in North America this year to support the introduction of the hardware. These have been divided into four categories: Children's, Music, Special Interest and Games. AIM has worked with leading software developers and top licensers, including such names as Time-Life and ABC Sports, to provide a variety of titles.

Magnavox announced a launch price of $1,400 for the CDI910 which includes a thumbstick remote control and two software titles.



Magnavox also revealed that initial software discs will range in price from $19.95 to $59.95.

As with the CDTV, a less sophisticated device with a similar concept, the quality of the software will be a major deciding factor in the success, or failure, of the next phase in interactive entertainment. CDTV has the advantage of being available right now, plus it's supposedly easier to develop product on this Amiga-based machine, whereas the pioneering CD-I titles look and sound far sexier. But at this early stage, there are no clear winners.

# Sony Probes The Future

Lookout Nintendo and Sega, there's a new handheld machine on the horizon which puts the Gameboy and Gamegear firmly in the shade. Sony was showing a prototype of the world's first portable CD-I player at the 2nd Multimedia Conference on Interactive CD in London last month.

The conference, which heralded the consumer launch of CD-I in the USA and Japan this year and Europe in 1992, focussed on the interests of publishing, programming and design for the new medium. Key speakers included Jan Timmer, President of Philips, and publishing mogul Robert Maxwell on characteristic form. At least Sony had some working silicon this year.

"Once again, Sony has taken a dream and turned it into practical reality," purrs the sales literature. Nevertheless, this baby looks hot.

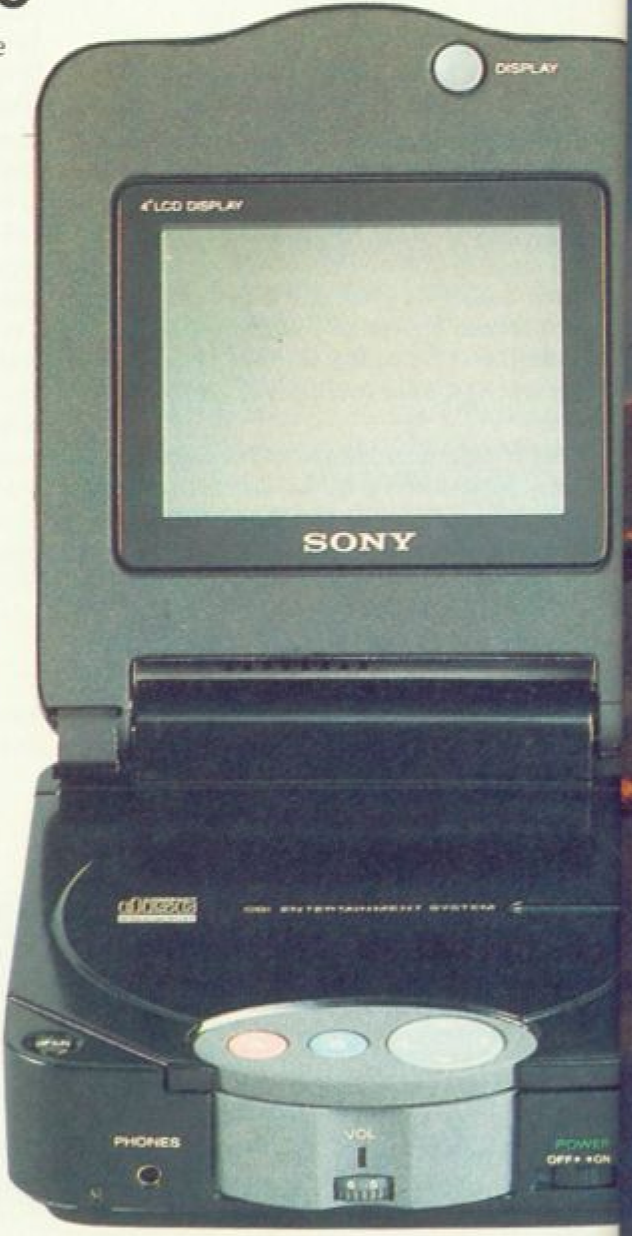
Sony's CD-I 'Walkman' is a compact little unit combining a full-fledged Compact Disc Interactive player, which is able to play CD-audio discs just like its Discman cousins, and a colour four-inch display. Three simple controls, a rotund joypad and two fire buttons, give you total control over the software. There is also a 'ghettoblaster' model under development. What will be next?

The data stored on a CDi disc is compatible with all current TV standards so you can also hook the mobile deck up to your television monitor and hi-fi speakers for full effect – even if you're in Europe, Japan or the USA.

The unnamed portable CD-I player, which remains a 'technology demonstration' at present, contains a 16-bit M68070 microprocessor and one megabyte of memory. CD-I's digital video and audio processing specifications allow for over 16 million colours and a maximum audio capacity of 19 hours.

A single CD-I disc can store over 100 million words or more than an entire 20-volume encyclopaedia.

"The most significant CD-I applications haven't been invented yet," notes Sony, "But interactive music software gives a hint of CD-I's entertainment potential. Imagine being able to instantly interact with your favourite entertainer in a multimedia environment. High quality sound, video clips, lyric sheets, liner notes, discography – everything is on the disc – and the audio-video playback arrangement is up to you. CD-I titles can be designed for all ages, from toddler to adult, and all situations."



*What's the latest in in-flight entertainment? Plane Aerobics, what else! Just as your gruelling transatlantic flight is nearly complete, the projector flickers into life and starts showing some really bizarre images. Three Yanks, wearing leotards, perform toe and hand stretching exercises. Are you dreaming or is this the Airlines answer to Monty Python? Nothing prepares you for what happens next. Your fellow American passengers join in and even clap when the embarrassing ordeal is over. I don't know about you but I'm travelling on the QE2 from now on.*

# Video Vigilante

Bored couch potatoes will soon have a weapon to counter-attack the banal TV programmes invading their homes. Would you like to blow away the smug Barry Norman or Terry Wogan?

The Video Vigilante is a new accessory that allows viewers to shoot the television by superimposing a shattered glass, bullet hole graphic over irritating images – or presenters – to the accompaniment of a gun shot, or any of a whole selection of other graphics and sound effects. You simply choose various effects, which range from a pie in the face to a brick thrown through the screen, by plugging in different cartridges.

"Viewers already shout and throw things at the TV screen," argues co-inventor John Pella, "The Vigilante gives them a way to shoot those annoying images with a great effect and good sound." The system works with broadcast, cable, closed circuit, satellite and video tapes. Operating just like a video game, Video Vigilante is controlled by joystick. Click fire and a pair of guidable crosshairs appear. A second click shoots the selected image.

Video Vigilante will be in North American stores by Christmas. A price is yet to be announced.

# Metropolis Of Multimedia

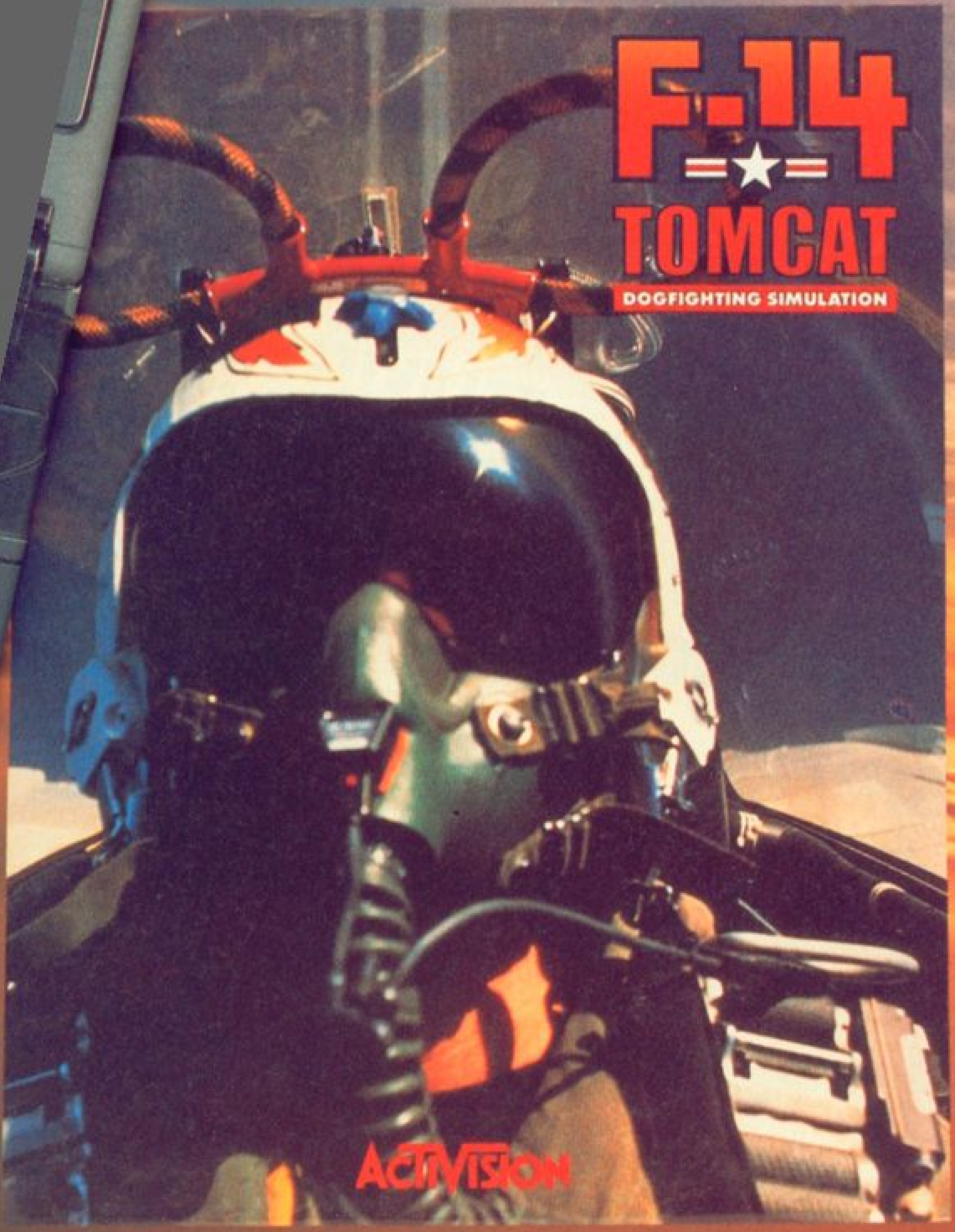
**Downtown Tokyo. If the race into work doesn't kill you, the pace of progress will. That's probably why the world's biggest software company is building a $10 million research and development facility in the capital of Japan.**

**Microsoft hopes the centre will expand the electronic horizons of multimedia, HDTV (high definition television) and satellite communications. Another booming market is the introduction of more Asian language software applications.**

**Japanese punters are already enjoying the benefits of hypermedia thanks to machines like the FM Towns, a 32-bit personal computer with built-in CD-ROM drive from Fujitsu. According to Koji Yada and Kozo Ohta of Japan's CSK Research Institute and Hyper Media Corporation, players can start licking their lips in anticipation of life-like games with elements of simulation and role-playing.**

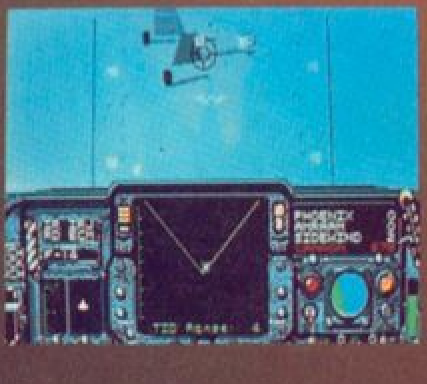
**The superbrights will start living in the labs from early next year, but will Microsoft have any spare cash to spend on the entertainment side of things?**

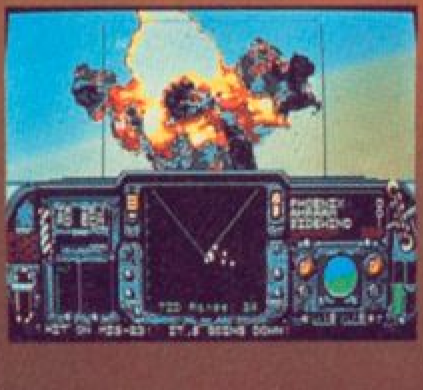
# F-14 TOMCAT



## The First Simulation Of The Most Famous Jet Fighter In The World

Join the elite fighter pilots in their battle for control over the skies. Fly the F-14 into life-or-death combat action, from the Persian Gulf to Libya and Korea. Battle it out in "Top Gun" school one-on-one challenges. Outgun Migs and SU 22's on carrier-based assignments. Variable skill levels make F-14 accurate enough for the expert, simple enough for the novice, and with a full real-time highlight film, you'll learn as you fly. Vivid 256-colour 3-D, digitised sound effects, bit-mapped explosions, a whole host of different viewing angles and an armoury hot enough to rule the skies make F-14 Tomcat a flight sim as deadly as the plane itself.





**Available in August on PC & Compatible Format.**

ACTIVISION

# letters

## HAPPY FAMICOMS

I don't know why people get so excited about the Super Famicom.

1) It offers nothing new that the Megadrive can't handle.

2) Its pricetag is ridiculously high at the moment. 3) It's just playing old games that have got a bit better (*SMB4, Gradius, R-Type, Populous Sim City* etc)

I'm not going to buy it for these reasons, and also because of the fact they've been trying to build a monopoly in the world of videogames.

If you don't believe me ask Tengen! There must be about 500 games available for the NES in the US and Japan. In Europe that are about 70 (grey import not included). There exists a portable NES but it isn't licenced by Nintendo, so the consumer has to pay twice the money in order to play the same game at home and elsewhere.

Sega does this too (Master System, Megadrive and Game Gear). I'm 27 years old and I've seen the rise and fall of systems like the VCS and the CBS Colecovision and in those days they just went for it (CBS even made games for the VCS!) Nowadays if you're gonna buy a system you'll have to face the fact that you're gonna miss a few titles.

In Europe almost every game that's released for the Amiga is released for the Atari ST. The situation's totally different for consoles, leaving us consumers standing in the cold.

The most innovative products I've seen the last couple of years have gone down the drain or are still struggling to survive. The Konix system, the Cybertech Proboy, the PC Engine GT (The first hand held system that plays first rate cartridges both at home and everywhere else) but you guys decided to give the PC Engine no more attention. Why?

And the Software-Corner Laserdisk adapter of course, I hope that the truly innovative and consumer friendly products get what they deserve in the near future; success that is.

By the way, I have a Gameboy, an Atari ST and a Megadrive and I'm gonna buy a PC Engine in the near future.

**Neyt Mario**
**Belgium**

*1) Yes it does.*

*2) It's pricey because it isn't officially available in Europe and some people are perfectly happy to pay over the odds to get one, thus keeping the prices high.*

*3) What's wrong with offering Famicom owners the chance to play classic games like* Populous and Sim City? *Should they have to buy an ST to enjoy these games?*

*4) You have to buy different versions of different games because (a) Nintendo and Sega don't wish to force people to choose between a home based system or a handheld and (b) the machines have different capabilities which have to be catered for.*

*5) We'll cover the PC Engine should its user-base become large enough.*

## SING SAMTHING SIMPLE

I read with some interest in your last issue that you will no longer support the 8-bit machine. My question is, does this include the Sam Coupe computer? There are now thousands of owners of this 8-bit computer, which possesses many characteristics of more expensive 16-bits, and after all, it is a new machine.

This computer has a steadily growing user base, and new games are now beginning to appear. I wonder whether ACE will cover these games as they appear?

You also mention that you hope users of 8-bits will turn to ACE when they upgrade. The fact is, many Spectrum owners have upgraded to the Coupe to use their existing software base as well as using specific Sam software with greatly enhanced sound and graphics. I understand negotiations are taking place with a number of companies for specific Sam releases, including *Navy Seals* from Ocean and *Prince of Persia* from Domark. The latter is supposedly the best version of all. I eagerly await comments on such games.

**Nick Drewett**
**Bushey**

*Correct! Domark are producing a copy of* Prince of Persia. *Well, sort of. A third party approached them with a completed game which, according to Domark was so fantastic they couldn't turn it down, even in the light of the Coupe's less than awesome sales. However, the game will appear under the SAM rather than the Domark label, and no-one really seems to know quite when it will be released.* Navy Seals, *however, would seem more unlikley propositon.*

*As for our coverage of the Coupe, we can't make any promises.*

## TELEVISION MAN

With regards to the television idea of a computer/console programme. I think this would be an excellent idea and could take the same line as your Direct Lines do in the pink pages. So you would have an 'expert' for each of the popular machines given ten minutes in the programme to give a run down on the latest releases, voice his opinion on some, and tell of future games. The program would last around an hour and could be shown early on Saturday morning, like the Chart Show.

This sort of programme wouldn't affect magazine sales, merely acting as a supplement to them.

Also if it was to be, say, once a month or once a fortnight it wouldn't be that expensive for a TV company to produce.

**Steven Lunt**
**Wigan**

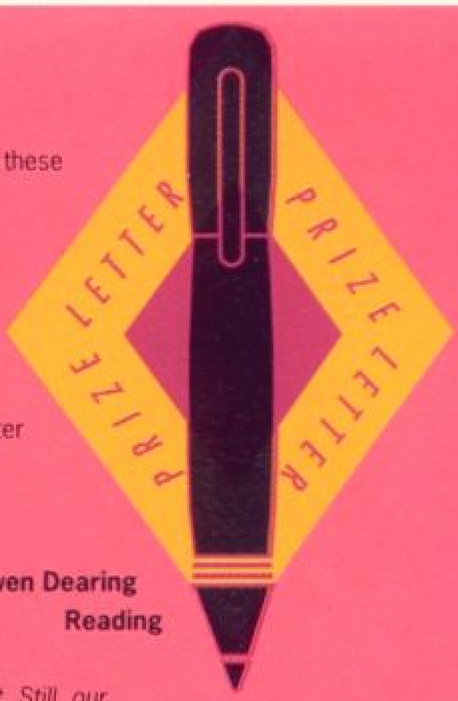
## WHEN I'M 65xe

Before I go on I would like to say your magazine is the best and I get it every month and have done since 88. I have three complaints (not about your magazine).

1) I own an Atari 65xe, the new xe, and not in over two years have I seen a magazine for my computer.

2) The 65xe is becoming more popular so how come I have to get my games from a shop 4

# FAST AND SMOOTH!



It may be that I am underestimating the power of such an organisation. Or, perhaps not being a pirate, these few words do not strike the terror into my heart that it might.

The words, of course, are *Federation of Free Traders*! Ahh! No! Do you think the threat of reporting pirates to FOFT (as you have warned at the end of the Readers' Pages) is going to finally stamp out this nasty breed of computer enthusiasts for good, or I suppose, it could be that you just made an error. Still, reporting pirates to FOFT would probably have just the same effect as reporting them to FAST.

Anyway, before the Federation Against Software Theft was set up, wasn't there a computer a computer users club for users of Fast Basic on the ST called FAST. I'm sure this has caused some confusion all around.

**Owen Dearing**
**Reading**

*Ooooops! Mind you, the Federation of Free Traders certainly put the fear of God into us when we saw it. Still, our person-wot-does-those-pages (ie; not me) has been reprimanded and made to play* Champion of the Raj *for a fortnight as a penalty.*

miles from where I live because no other shops sell them.

3) The only games I can get are £1.99 things (not saying that some of them are bad) but how come I can't get games like *Out Run*, *Double Dragon*, *Silkworm*?

My personal computer was out before the ST and the ST already has a mag; ACE.

**David Bubb**
**Eltham**

*Alas we know of no magazines covering the 65xe. Possibly your best bet for new games info would be to join a users group. And if any readers know of such a thing, we'd be only too pleased to pass on the information.*

# MAKING THE UPGRADE

At the moment I am the proud owner of a C64, and thinking of up-grading to a better machine. However, my parents say that I will use it as a gloryfied games console. Also they argue that what can, say an Amiga do that a C64 can't? Do you think it is worth shelling out £300 to £400 of even £1000 on a better computer. Please could you give me some advice as I don't know what to do.

Also, if my parents do finally decide to let me lay my hands on a 16-bit machine, I don't know which to get. For a decent PC it would cost £1,000 so that is definitely out of the question. So what am I left with? Most of my friends own Amigas and a few own STs and after playing on both of them I would say that the Amiga is best by far. But is it £100 better than the ST?

**C I Stevenson**
**Lancashire**

*It sounds as if you've pretty much made up your own mind. So what are we left to answer? Is the Amiga £100 better than the ST? Well, we have to say, in the light of market trends and so on, Yes.*

# EASY PCs

Right! That's it! I've had enough! What on earth do hardware and software companies think they're playing at? I own a PC with VGA and 20 meg hard drive; nothing especially fantastic, but a decent enough machine nonetheless. I've had the machine for about a year now, and until recently was very happy with its capabilities.

Now, however, a situation has arisen which I am less than happy about. Games from companies like Mindscape and Sierra are now so big, frequently numbering 8 discs each, that I can only store about 5 games on my hard drive.

This means that whenever I purchase a new game, not only do I have the annoyance of having to install the program onto my hard drive (anyone remember games you could play from disc?) but I have to erase one of the other games, necessitating another hefty install at a later date. What a bore!

Now, the blame can hardly be aimed in Mindscape or Sierra's direction (although I suspect that a little bit more data compression wouldn't go amiss). They are simply trying to give punters like myself value for money.

Unlike PC dealers, who seem to be ripping us off! I've been looking in a few American mags recently, and you can get a top-of-the-range VGA PC with 100meg hard drive, more sound boards, joysticks and drives than you can shake a stick at for £1,000; the same cost as a bog standard machine here.

What is going on? I'm extremely cheesed off. Are we Brits being ripped off or is America (and the rest of the world, so far as I can tell) some sort of dreamy Utopia where everything is cheap?

Please tell me, ACE - I'm at my wits' end!

**Paul Bradford**
**Cheshire**

*A sad situation. And one that we have experienced ourselves. Our ACE PC in fact, is just about to be replaced owing to it's new-found uselessness. And all as a result of similar circumstances. It's not unreasonable to have to clean out one's hard drive every now and again, and it's not even the number of games that you can or can't fit on the machine which we find annoying. It is, as you correctly point out, the outrageous pricing difference between machinery over in the States and here which irks us.*

*However,there would appear to be some light at the end of the tunnel - PC prices are coming down at the moment, and while they're still a long way above the silly numbers found on the other side of the pond, it is possible to find a PC with a decent hard drive and all the bells and whistles for around £1200.*

# STRIP SEARCH

I'm writing to say the cartoon strips in the ACE technoguide, particularly *Bobby's Toad* and *Johnny's Goggles* particularly amusing, though I must admit that I didn't get the joke in *Things in Boxes*.

Anyway, it got me thinking about other strip ideas for a possible future guide. How about *CD Ron - He's a big con*, about a criminal who uses a vast CD-Rom database to help him rob banks or something? Or *Mandy's Megadrive - It makes games come alive*, about a consoles that makes the sprites in a little girl's game cartridges come to life?

**Daniel Bree,**
**Glastonbury**

*To be perfectly honest with you, I didn't understand* Things in Boxes *either! As to your strip ideas,* CD Ron *has promise (I like the pun), though you don't explain quite how this character to get up to mischief, and* Mandy's Megadrive *is perhaps a little too similar to* Freddy's Full-Motion Freak *to be used. Still, glad the strips generated some response!*

# BACK TO THE FUTURE?

After reading ACE compulsively for the last year, I felt I must write to say what a load of rubbish, nay, codswallop I think all this future technology business is. It's just another thinly-veiled excuse for money-grabbing softcos and hardware manufacturers to squeeze more money out of the exploited games-playing public. Well, we won't stand for it anymore!

Recently, I had the opportunity to sample that new virtual reality coin-op in a London arcade. Two quid it cost me. What a load of rubbish! All the graphics were blurry, the helmet was far too heavy and the game was very disappointing. Call me an old square, but the way I see it, until these VR sprocketheads can come up with something as realistic as the system seen in the movie *Brainstorm*, they should stay locked in their little broom cupboards and not try to fob us off with their half-arsed failed experiments. Come back when you've got something that is GENUINELY realistic, eh chaps?

And CD-I? A load of pish if ever I saw it. It's yet another excuse for penny-pinching softcos to get away with releasing sub-standard games by dressing them up in flashy graphics. Of course software publishers love technical breakthroughs - it allows them to be lazy on the gameplay front.

Whatever happened to the good old days of the games industry, when games like *3D Ant Attack* and *Tornado Low Level* ruled supreme? Because the capacity for graphics and sound were minimal, programmers had to impress by doing playable games. Now they have all these 4096 colour whatnots and 32-channel oojamaflips they just sit back, tap in a few lines out of some textbook, pat themselves on the back and then go off to buy themselves a new pair of Guccis with the earnings - which come out of OUR pockets.

Well, I say it's time to stop. I think that we should all be forced to go back to our old 8-bit machines, so that gameplay will once again become the most important factor in a piece of software. And while we're about it, let's scrap all this talk about VR and CD-I, eh? Come on brothers! If the kids are united, we will never be divided.

**Oswald Ulysses Reckon**
**Potters Bar**

*Steady on! While we at ACE share your sentiments that gameplay should always come first, there's no need to have a go at future technology to support your argument. It seems to us that your ideology is tinged with a streak of paranoia and narrow-minded techno-fear as you attempt to fight off the future with these futile dreams of an industry that once was. You can't go back you know, so the only way to look is to the future - which, you'd find if you just opened your eyes a little - is getting brighter by the picosecond. Wake up and smell the coffee, why don't you?*

# MEGABYTE MISERY

After reading the excellent ACE preview, I rushed out to buy a copy of MicroProse's *F-15 Strike Eagle II* for my Amiga. However, on booting my new purchase, I experienced loading difficulties and consulted the manual to see if I was doing anything wrong. It was only then that I discovered from a small Amiga version booklet that the game only works on a 1 Meg machine.

Since I have only an unexpanded Amiga 500, this is hardly any good to me. Since I am planning to buy a Meg expansion within the next few weeks, I won't be taking the game back - but it's useless to me in the meantime, and what about 512K users with no plans to expand who bought the game?

I know that more and more Amiga owners have megs now, but what about the poor unfortunates who don't? It hardly seems fair. So come on MicroProse. It's not difficult to put a 1 Meg Only sticker on the front of the box to protect any potential half-meg buyers. I hope this isn't some kind of deception they're running to con more people into buying the game, and I hope this is only an isolated incident. I'd hate to see this kind of trend continuing.

**Henry Fisher**
**Godalming**

*Fear not, oh paranoid one. This is not a subtle plan to grab half-meg owner's dosh. A simple call to the Prose boys explained the problem. A cock-up in administration saw the first batch of F-15s being shipped to the shops without 1Meg warning stickers. The mistake is currently being rectified, with sticker-sheets being sent out to shops, so they can modify their packaging. And, of course, all further copies of the game will have a warning sticker. MicroProse assures us that if you did fall foul, there should be no problem taking the game back to the place of purchase to get it sorted.*

# BARGAINS GALORE

While visiting my local software shops the other day, I noticed that all of them had one thing in common: they were selling the newest games at crazy cut-down prices! *Blitzkrieg* and *White Death* were labelled at only £9.95 each, while *The Killing Cloud, Brat* and *UMS II* weighed in at only £14.95. The *Corporation Mission Disk* and a sprinkling of budget titles were available for under a fiver.

When I enquired about why everything was so cheap, I was informed that they were not selling many games at the moment. This is due to a sales slump, current recession, and the fact that the majority of big releases appear at Christmas.

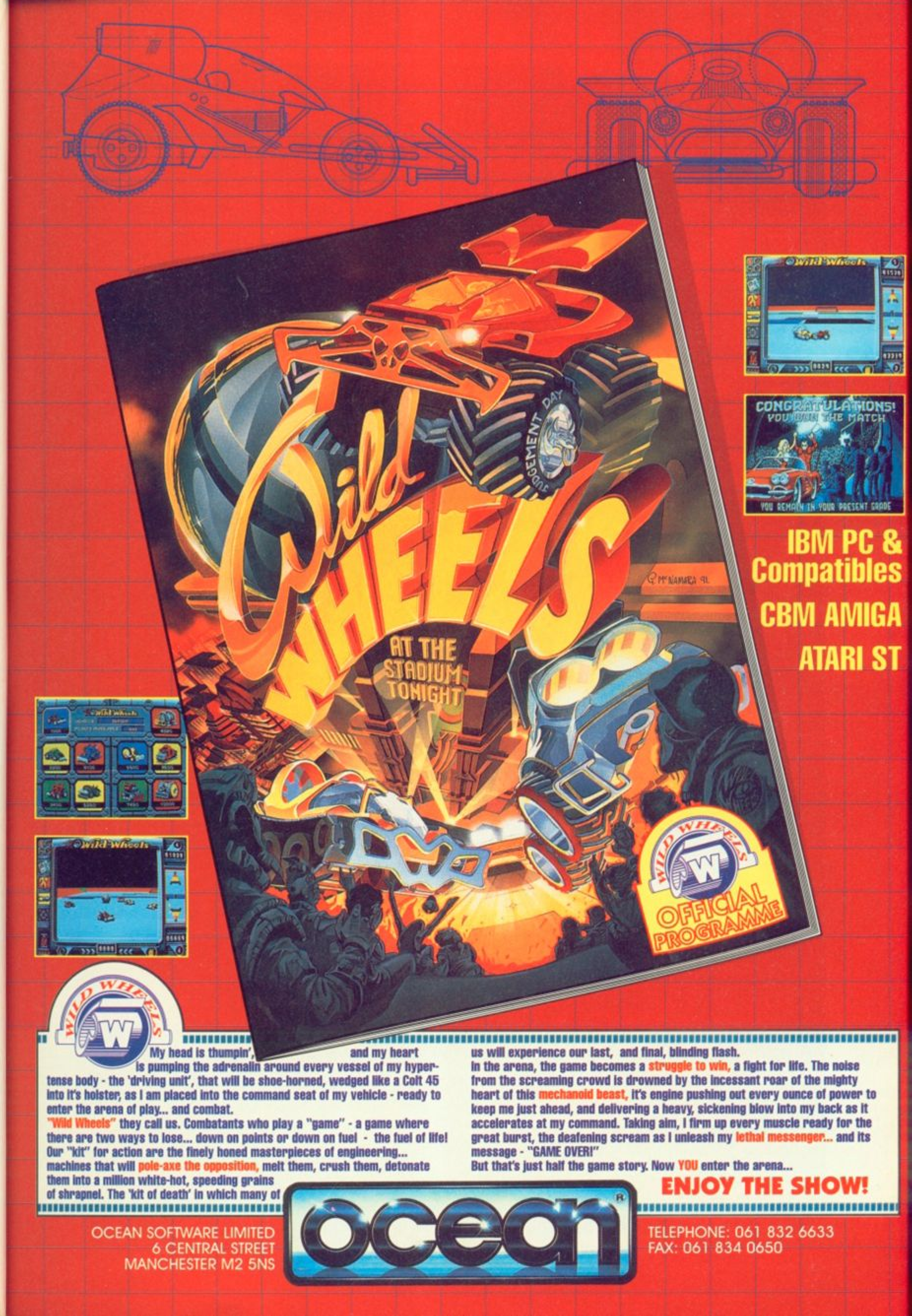
Is it the same everywhere, or is Sheffield just an isolated case? I just hope that none of these local stores really feel the bite and have to close - one of them has already had to fill surplus shelves with board games, paints and miniatures.

Even worse, will the companies themselves suffer from stores selling off their titles cheaply and go the same way as Hewson. This is just one casualty and I hope that there won't be any more who get swallowed up before the current situation sorts itself up. What are your predictions?

Anyway, now for a question. Concerning your in-depth feature of the game *Robin Hood* in last month's issue. What exactly is one of those Turtle jobs doing in a game such as this? I noticed it in the sprite block picture on page 60 (right at the bottom left-hand corner) and wondered if it was supposed to be some kind of competition for your readers. Am I the only one who noticed this, and if so, do I win a prize?

**Stuart N. Hardy**
**Sheffield**

*Interesting point, Stewpot. It's a well known fact the software industry 'enjoys' a bit of a slump during the summer months. But the softcos get their wedge no matter how cheaply the games are eventually sold for, don't you worry about that. Vis a vis the* Robin Hood *query - yes, you are the only person to have noticed it, and no, you don't win anything.*


Wild Wheels
JUDGEMENT DAY
Wild WHEELS
AT THE STADIUM TONIGHT
G McNAMARA 91
WILD WHEELS
W
OFFICIAL PROGRAMME
CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU WON THE MATCH
YOU REMAIN IN YOUR PRESENT GRADE

**IBM PC & Compatibles**

**CBM AMIGA**

**ATARI ST**

My head is thumpin', and my heart is pumping the adrenalin around every vessel of my hyper-tense body - the 'driving unit', that will be shoe-horned, wedged like a Colt 45 into it's holster, as I am placed into the command seat of my vehicle - ready to enter the arena of play... and combat.

"Wild Wheels" they call us. Combatants who play a "game" - a game where there are two ways to lose... down on points or down on fuel - the fuel of life! Our "kit" for action are the finely honed masterpieces of engineering... machines that will pole-axe the opposition, melt them, crush them, detonate them into a million white-hot, speeding grains of shrapnel. The 'kit of death' in which many of us will experience our last, and final, blinding flash.

In the arena, the game becomes a struggle to win, a fight for life. The noise from the screaming crowd is drowned by the incessant roar of the mighty heart of this mechanoid beast, it's engine pushing out every ounce of power to keep me just ahead, and delivering a heavy, sickening blow into my back as it accelerates at my command. Taking aim, I firm up every muscle ready for the great burst, the deafening scream as I unleash my lethal messenger... and its message - "GAME OVER!"

But that's just half the game story. Now YOU enter the arena...

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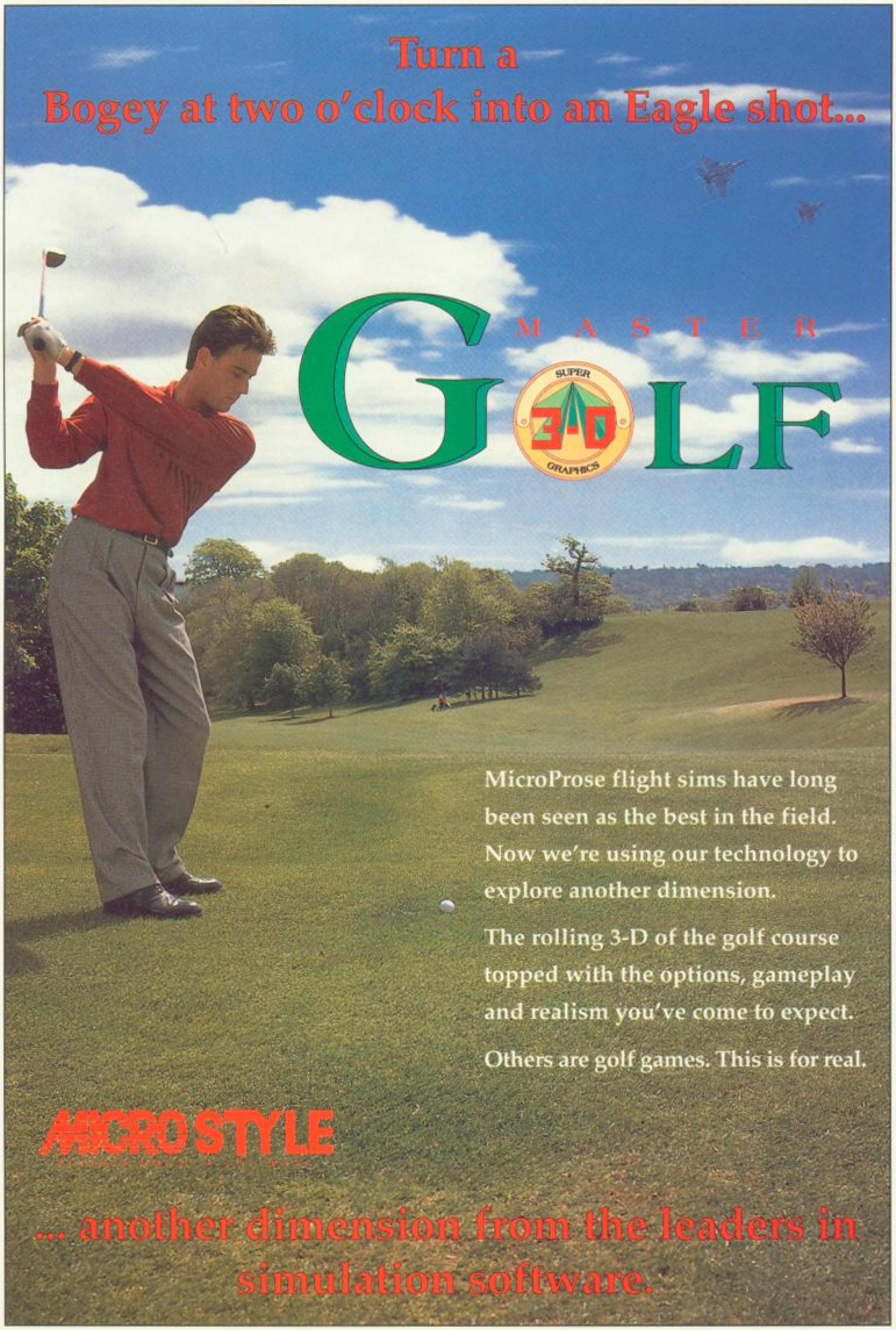

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# ACES IN WINDY CITY

### While Jim Douglas did all the work at Chicago's CES, Steve Cooke got well and truly stuffed...

There was a time when Summer CES at Chicago was THE place to spot hot Christmas releases. That was the time when softco's were so disorganised that June saw most of them still desperately trying to decide (a) whether they would still be around at Christmas and (b) if so, what they could possibly get onto the market (in untested, un-debugged state) by around 4.30pm on December 23rd.

The message behind this year's bash at Chicago was that those industrially adolescent years are now well and truly behind us. Yes, every stand boasted countless monitors demoing this year's offerings for Santa and no, no-one paid the blindest bit of attention...because they'd seen them all before at spring CES in January. There are two reasons for this uncharacteristic efficiency. First, take a game like Sid Meier's *Civilisation* (building cultures on the Microprose stand). Like so many of today's games, this is so complex that if you hadn't programmed in the concepts of Thatcherism by June, come Christmas you'd risk giving your punters a game that couldn't handle anything later than the Renaissance Era. And as we know, so much has happened since then... (Discuss - Ed)

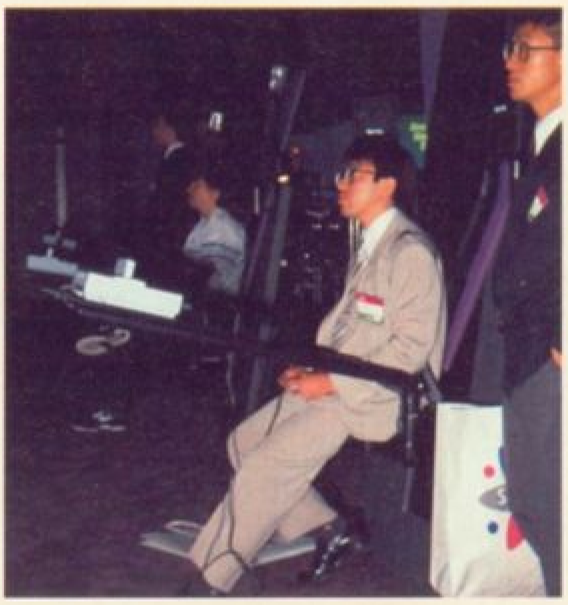
The second reason is that the men in suits have learned that space on Santa's sleigh is strictly limited. Unless you can invite your distributors on a round-the-world cruise in late June, you can kiss goodbye to sales in late December...and heaven help the programming team who can't come up with a sexy looking pre-prod version for on-board entertainment.

As a result of all this new found professionalism, there really weren't that many surprises at summer CES – just one of many factors spread throughout the consumer electronics sector that prompted at least one paper to question whether June was still a realistic time for a major show.

Not that there weren't pockets of excitement, which we've picked and piccied for you on these pages, but most of these paled into insignificance beside Chicago's main attraction – stuffed pizza. None of your namby-pamby Pizza Hut offerings here – each item on the menu was so awesomely large that, when yours truly ordered a 'Small', the waiter did a double-take and said 'A small?? For one person?? You couldn't possibly eat one of those – they're collossal!'. So forget deep pan, forget thin and crispy, and – while others debate whether we should forget summer CES as well – get stuffed.

**(Above) The high-tech world of Nintendo dominated the games arena at Chicago CES yet again, despite industry sniping at reduced sales. The company fought back, claiming that 93% of the 29 million NES purchasers were still 'active users' and that any fall-off in sales would be more than compensated for by the US launch of the Super Famicon this winter at $199 – nearly $50 more expensive than the already available Sega Genesis (Megadrive in the UK). Software sales for NES are claimed to have hit the 15 million unit mark in the first six months of 1991 with 40 new titles for American players later this year, giving a total library of 400 games.**

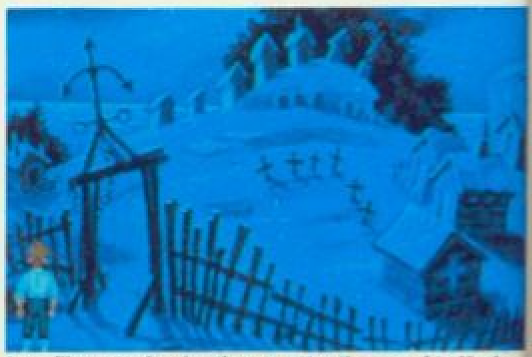
**Game Boy is doing well too, apparently, with claimed sales of 12 million in two years. Again, another 49 titles are planned for release later in 1991. The company attribute their success to software: 'No matter what the playing field,' said marketing supremo Peter Main,' Nintendo still believes that the name of the game is games...'**



**(Right) Punters slip into massive demo-consoles equipped with Super Famicoms and watch themselves playing *Super Mario World* on vast wall-mounted displays. Despite the undeniable virtues of some of the Super Famicom software, the atmosphere on the Nintendo stand was strangely muted. When you work in a bank, they say, even the largest denomination banknotes soon feel like so much scrap paper...**

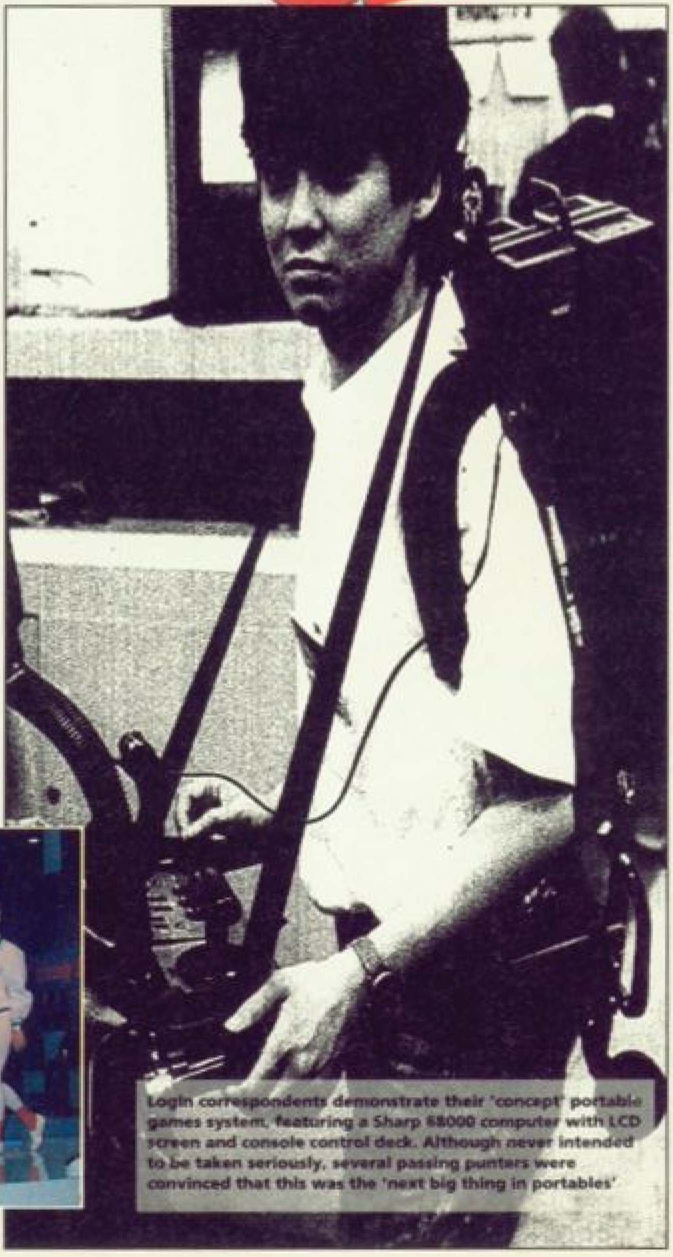
Namco were selling us... wait for it... *PacMan*, but with a difference. Pac has refused to lie down and play dead ever since his appearance in the late 70s. Endlessly cloned, Namco failed to pursue copyright actions against their numerous imitators in Europe, paving the way for a rather low-key release of the 'official' version for the Spectrum by Atarisoft. This latest official offering on the Game Boy is exactly what you'd expect, with all the hallmarks of the original including the wilting Pac (complete with tear drops), infuriating tune, and bonus fruit. Big bonus, however, is that the game is the first ever two-player version, in which gulping down a ghost sends it to your opponent's maze. Sounds neat, despite the geriatric game scenario, so watch out for a forthcoming Pac-page in ACE

This robot brought tears of recognition to the ACE team's eyes: it used to grace the reception area of Namco's offices in Tokyo, fooling visitors into thinking that sec-tech had reached lofty heights of silicon sophistication. Actually, all it does is flash its eyes and make noises...



Lucasfilm were showing the very attractive sequel to *Monkey Island – LeChuck's Revenge*. The game features more islands to visit, more characters, an improved interface (including an icon-based inventory) and – something of a novelty for a graphic adventure – three skill levels. 'Each skill level features different puzzles, not just the same puzzle made harder or simplified,' claim the company.

(Below) Punters were stunned by the realism of this Panasonic HDTV demonstration, until it was pointed out that it WAS real. Most people then lost interest in everything except the,er, health and efficiency aspects of the display. In the end, HDTV didn't stage the impressive presence that many people had expected, although Toshiba showed us what the system can do with a stunning demo of a wide-screen format home theatre system. Even that, however, fell slightly flat when people realised that it wasn't a TV at all but a clever 6-lens back-projection system. That said, there's not doubt that HDTV, when it hits, will revolutionise home entertainment – video games included. The thought of *Super Mario World* on HDTV is enough to splatter slobber over the stiffest upper lip...



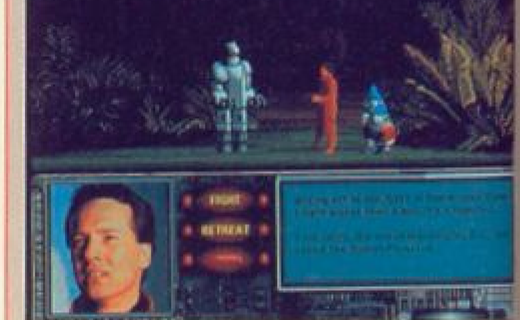
Login correspondents demonstrate their 'concept' portable games system, featuring a Sharp 68000 computer with LCD screen and console control deck. Although never intended to be taken seriously, several passing punters were convinced that this was the 'next big thing in portables'

Reach for the sky, pardner! Old timers relive Confederate fantasies as they plug hombres on-screen in one of the latest laserdisc-based shoot-em-ups, in which cowboys saunter around town and you fill'em full of lead. Nothing like a new idea to pull the punters in, eh?

Fancy a spot of in-car entertainment? This modest little system, currently under development by the US Army uses Megadeth to bring down low-flying aircraft

## CROWNING CLAYMATION

One of the highlights of the show wasn't actually at the show at all, but hidden away in a room at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Kellyn '*Defender of the Crown*' Beck has teamed up with Will 'I invented Claymation and the California Raisins and won an Oscar' Vinton to form a new



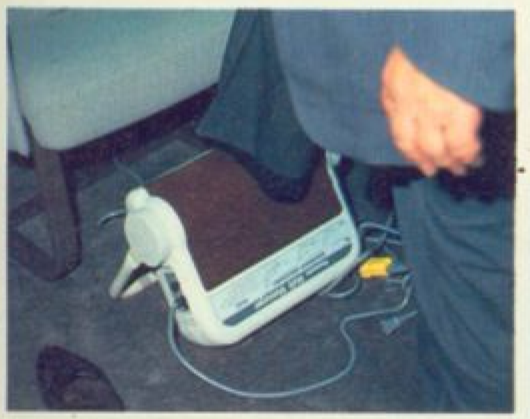
## IN BRIEF...

- Remember that joint venture between Sony and Nintendo to produce a CD-Super Famicom? Well now it's history as Nintendo have stunned the industry by announcing that they'll be linking up with Philips instead. Since Sony already have an agreement to bundle the Super Famicom circuitry with their PlayStation (as it's been provisionally called) we have the interesting situation of an unofficial 16-bit Nintendo-compatible machine coming onto the market – unless Sony decide to scrap it, which at present seems not to be the case. Although Nintendo themselves won't be supporting the system, it's hard to see software developers turning down big cheques from Sony, which are apparently in the offing with one condition: that you can develop for any other system EXCEPT the Philips/Nintendo box. Hell hath no fury like a Sony scorned, it seems.

- Philips announced CD-I again. CD-I is an interactive compact disk that...zzz zzz zzz zzz. The only thing that kept punters awake here was the prospect of Super Famicom-compatible CD-I titles, raised explicitly by Nintendo following the announcement of their link-up with Philips (see above). It does look certain, however, that CD-I will finally hit the shelves in the US in October for around $1400 without full frame, full motion video and the UK a year later with FMV.

- Interplay Productions were showing off the latest version of *The Two Towers*, the second instalment of their remarkably faithful adaptation of the Tolkien book. Graphics and game detail are noticeably better – stand by for a review in an imminent issue of ACE...

- Sony's *Equinox* for the Super Famicom made the most impressive use of the machine's hardware rotate facility. Landscape features have been cleverly designed as circular elements, which are then slightly counter-rotated to give the impression of parallax while the entire landscape is spun around your central figure. Very neat indeed.



What a great idea: an automated foot massager! What a terrible idea: getting punters to remove their shoes after a hard day's slog in the Chicago heatwave to try it out. This pair were so honky they could have gone walkies all by themselves – in fact you could probably have taught them to fetch sticks...

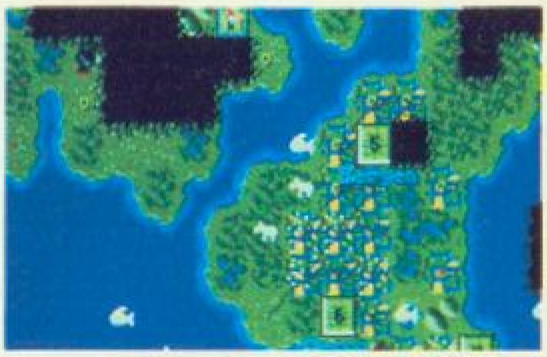
company called Cineplay Interactive. This astute move gives Vinton a hold in the rapidly growing interactive entertainment market and Kellyn gets to include all that whacky Claymation technology in his games.

*Detectron*, the first Cineplay title for PC, Amiga, and Apple Mac, features stunning graphics and a cleverly simplified menu system that plunge you a thousand years into the future as a revived detective solving a murder in a robot-dominated Washington DC. Fully animated talking heads, superb animated figures (thanks to that clay), and a three-button control system that modifies itself constantly according to the available gameplay options make *Detectron* easy to play without compromising on atmosphere. Definitely a title – and a company – to watch out for...

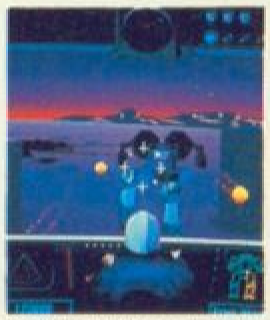
(Left) Very effective blending of realistic human figures and 'claymated' characters in *Detectron*.

(Right) Another example of animated clay in *Detectron* – note the menu buttons in the centre of the control panel, which constantly self-modify to present appropriate options

*B.O.T.S.* could be the answer to Microprose's coin-op problems. Although 'Prose remain bullish about the fortunes of the *F15 Strike Eagle* slottie, reports on its success during site testing have been somewhat mixed. Oft-quoted is the difficulty factor, which tends to bewilder newcomers as much as it mesmerises them with sexy graphics. *B.O.T.S.*, however, couldn't be simpler as you hunk around the landscape reducing killer robos to scrap. Let's hope it takes off on the street as successfully as it did at the show

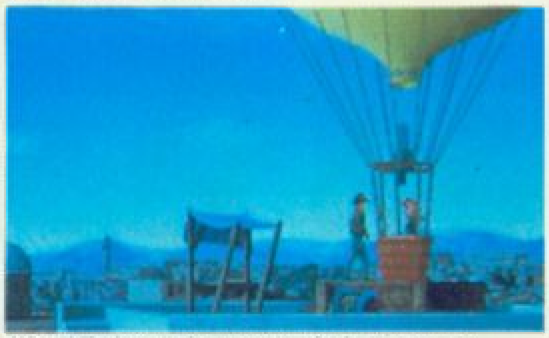


(Left) Sid Meier's *Civilisation* is a sort of interactive silicon Petri dish in which you can mix'n'match mankind in an effort to propagate your own civilisations, whilst at the same time avoiding or repelling the unwelcome attentions of people like Attila the Hun or Ghengis Khan. The program kicks off in 4000BC, fielding a small nomadic tribe. You then attempt to coach the little beggars to the top of the league by balancing economical, political, and defense factors. Sid's games, which range from *F19* to *Railroad Tycoon*, are legendary and this one should be no exception, were it not for a sneaking anxiety that this particular match is being played on rather a large pitch. Has Sid bitten off more than he can chew? Can attention to detail really transform slightly blocky graphics in a game

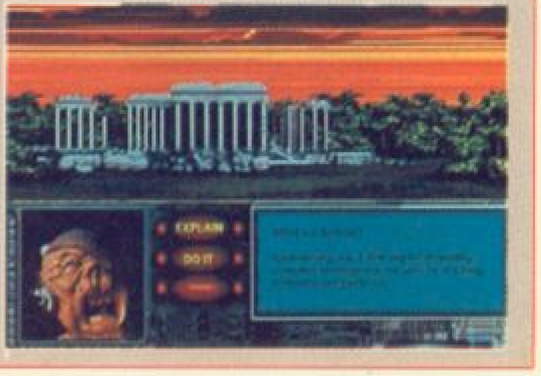


(Above Left) Create a miniature jungle in the middle of CES, populate it with scantily clad Janes, surround it with video cameras (all equipped with power zooms) and what do you get? A pathetic crowd of male hairless apes all struggling desperately to score with inventive and revealing camera angles. Far be it for us to strike the high moral ground here – we were far too interested in the wildlife to remember what company's stand we were patronising...

(Above Right) All hands on desk! These plastic animated limbs waggled and waved at passers-by, along with a flock of hideous roast chickens that wriggled on the plate and a shoal of fish telephones. However disappointing CES may have been on the software front, the mind-numbing trivia remains an endless source of fascination.



(Above) The latest Indy game *Fate of Atlantis* resurrects the Third Reich and a typically apocalyptic plot in 'The most complex game ever published by Lucasfilm Games'. The screenshot speaks for itself, but the company were also keen to point out over 200 locations, 100 original artworks, 256 VGA colour graphics, video rotoscoping for accurate character animation, and a new 'player sensitive' operating system that monitors your behaviour and then pitches you into different sections of the game based on either puzzles, action, or character interaction depending on the previous preferences you've shown. Looks like a must for Indy fans, particularly since this is one movie scenario you won't be seeing at the cinema.

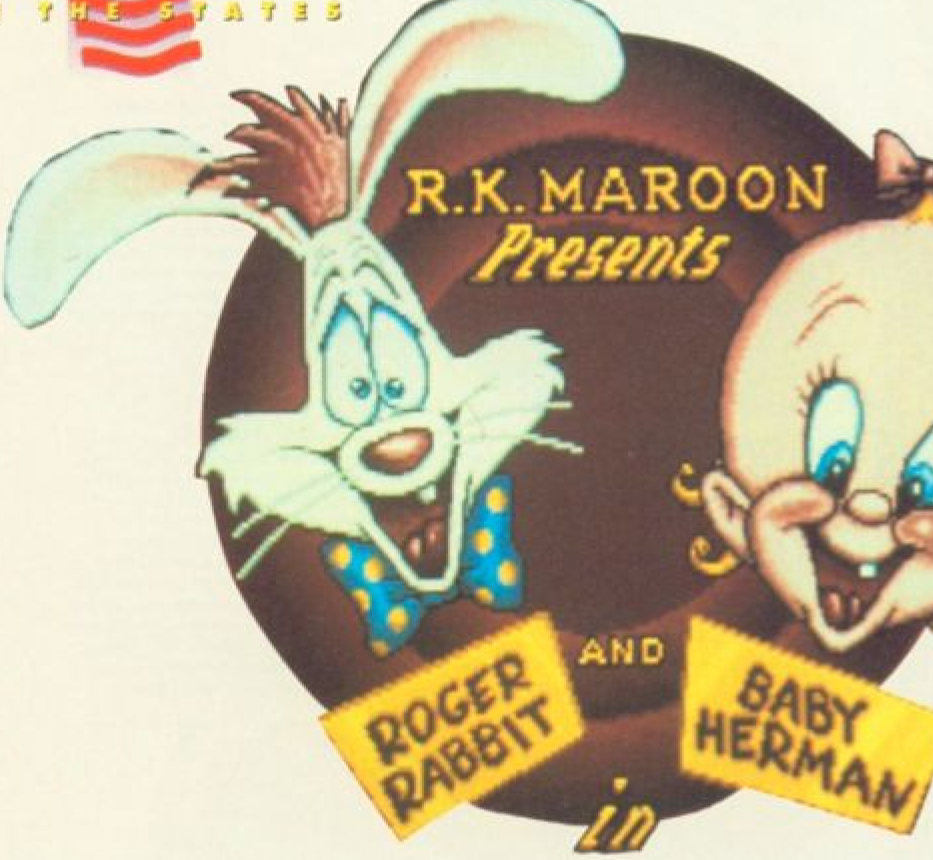


SHARP
DAT
DIGITAL

This neat little portable DAT recorder from Sharp was just one feature of the evolving Digital Audio Tape scene, now under serious fire from Philips' new Digital Compact Cassette (DCC) format. DCC systems were not on display at CES, but expect to see them on these pages when we report from January CES in 1992. Meanwhile, Matshushita joined several other companies in announcing that they would be manufacturing DCC machines for the consumer market. DCC currently appears to be gathering speed rather faster than DAT, which requires more expensive hardware in the players. 'DAT was created by engineers for engineers,' said a spokesman for DCC-committed Marantz, '...but it isn't for the average Joe.' So there...

micro-theatre

With Design in Mind were demonstrating their Microtheatre system, which uses carefully concealed parabolic mirrors to create the illusion of a video image 'suspended in space' in front of the user. In this picture you can just make out a pair of angel fish cavorting inside the cabinet and, since there's no glass panel in front, you can put your hand in and try to grab them if you want to look silly. The 'floating in space' effect has prompted people to compare the Microtheatre system to 3D animated holography, but in fact it isn't 3D at all – altering your point of view doesn't reveal hidden faces of the image. It's all done with mirrors – parabolic ones, to be exact – and you can do the trick yourself in your next physics class. The secret behind this system, however, is the use of particularly high-grade optics to maximise the effect. Sega are about to launch a game based on the system, which you'll be able to see at the European Computer Entertainment Show at Earls Court in September.



**With DYNAMIX looking to build on their computer-film success with interactive cartoons, and DISNEY fairly stomping ahead with a brace of big name titles, the two are gearing up for a major assault on the top-end of the market.**

# the ODD COUPLE

## DISNEY

Disney Software's releases to date haven't exactly been pitched at the high-end of gaming, revolving round Mickey Mouse's endeavours to avoid arcade-action death in the *Castle of Illusion* and Donald Duck's arithmetic for beginners.

However, the next batch of product would appear to promise a considerable image hike for the firm, certainly in the age profile stakes.

The firm's glittering press luncheon in a plush restaurant in the swanky part of Chicago was an impressive afair, not only for the effort Disney had put in ensuring the ladies and gentlemen from the world's press were well fed and watered, but also for providing a brace of product managers on hand to demo their own projects.

Although being filtered around the outskirts of the room felt a little like being on some sort of public relations conveyor belt and the slick spiel was a little over-done for the tastes of some Brits, the entire presentation was a pleasant enough affair.

*Release Date:* Summer '91

## DICK TRACY

The movie may have been a flop and the first game may have been dreadful, but Disney's latest crack at the game of the film of the cartoon of the man in the yellow coat looks to be more successful than you might expect.

Radio-wristed Dick must patrol a grizzly crime-ridden metropolis delivering his own rough edged form of justice to the mob while trying to keep just on the right side of the law. His arch-enemy, Big Boy Caprice is behind the 'dozens of randomly generated crimes' (hem, hem) which Dick must solve.

This time there's actually a bit of detecting to do, with clues to various nefarious goings on littered around the town and Dick, with the help of regular bulletins from Police HQ haring around the town roughing up fellons.

Albeit in an extremely predictable mold, the game at least looks presentable enough. There's a healthy amoung of data to be gathered on each suspect, accomplices, aliases, known hide-outs, etc, and at least the animation promises to be better than the diabolical farce of its predecessor.

*Release Date:* Summer '91

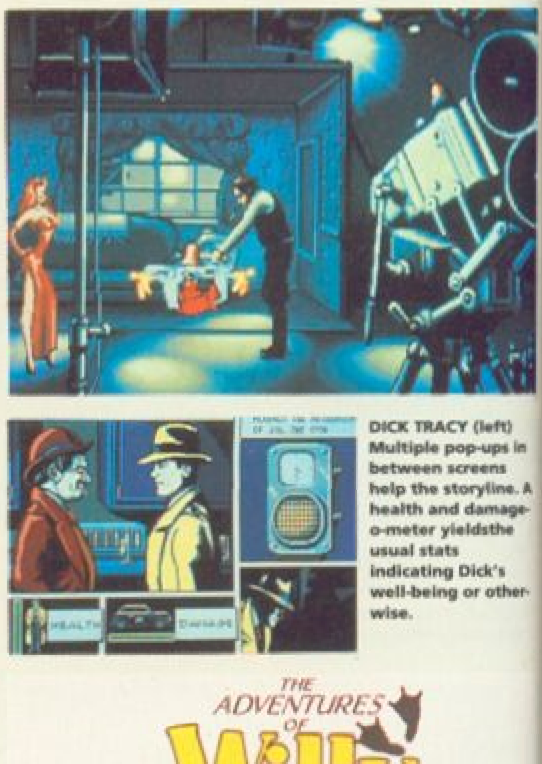
## HARE RAISING HAVOC

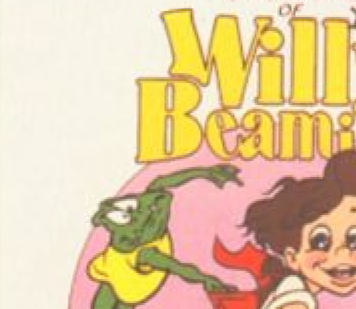
Roger Rabbit, the lisping long-eared wiseass who shot to stardom in *Who Framed RR* and more recently as the decidedly superior half of a Dick Tracy double bill is about to appear in a computer game of his very own adventure.

Baby Herman, angel faced psychotic toddler of the first movie has been given to Roger to babysit by Mom. Should any unpleasantness befall Herman, Roger will be for the high jump.

Disney's aim this time was to produce *an interactive cartoon*, and if first impressions are anything to go by, they've had a pretty good rate of success.

The game is constructed from a number scenes each featuring a unique set of





**DICK TRACY (left) Multiple pop-ups in between screens help the storyline. A health and damage-o-meter yieldsthe usual stats indicating Dick's well-being or otherwise.**

THE ADVENTURES OF Willy Beamish

animations, loading off the disk in chunks. The advantage, obviously, is the game designers can define a whole new bunch of animations for Roger for each situation. Who knows what pushing up on the joystick will do when you're standing on a springy ironing board as opposed to standing on the sofa..?

And indeed, the game looks well suited to the setup, being broken down into chunks, usually a couple of rooms long. Each provides a new mini game with new rules and potential for Roger to explore.

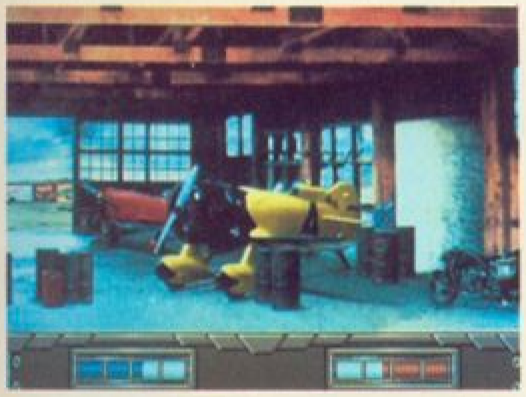
The initial challenge is to help Roger escape from the living room of the house, a considerably more complex problem than may at first be apparent.

If this all sounds a bit *Dragon's Lair*, don't be alarmed. The player is afforded a great deal more freedom over Roger's antics. Each location is also pretty safe to begin with, only placing Roger in a dangerous situation with warning.

*Release Date:* Summer '91

## ROCKETEER

Shortly to appear as a major motion picture in the cinemas in the States, *Rocketeer* is a real back-to-good-old-values style of movie with clean cut hero, dastardly Nazi villains and a whole bunch of hairy scrapes.



All of which add up to a pretty excellent game formula. And indeed, Disney are pinning a lot on the game.

All the action in the film has been rolled up into a suite of sub-games. So far as our early information reveals, there's a great deal of flying (no big surprise) and some Lucasfilm/Cinemaware style sequences too.

*Release Date:* Autumn '91

## STUNT ISLAND

It's no place for novices, *Stunt Island.* Only the top-ranking elite flyboys need apply for a vacation on this adrenalin-intensive holiday paradise.

Billed by Disney as the flying and filming simulation, *Stunt Island* allows the flyer to select from a batch of dreamy historical aeroplanes and then 'film' themselves performing dangerous stunts.

As well as realistic polygon flight, the game boasts the most comprehensive self-video and variable playback features seen in any title.

The purpose is to become an expert pilot and film-maker and earn yourself a fistful of cash along the way.

*Release Date:* Autumn '91

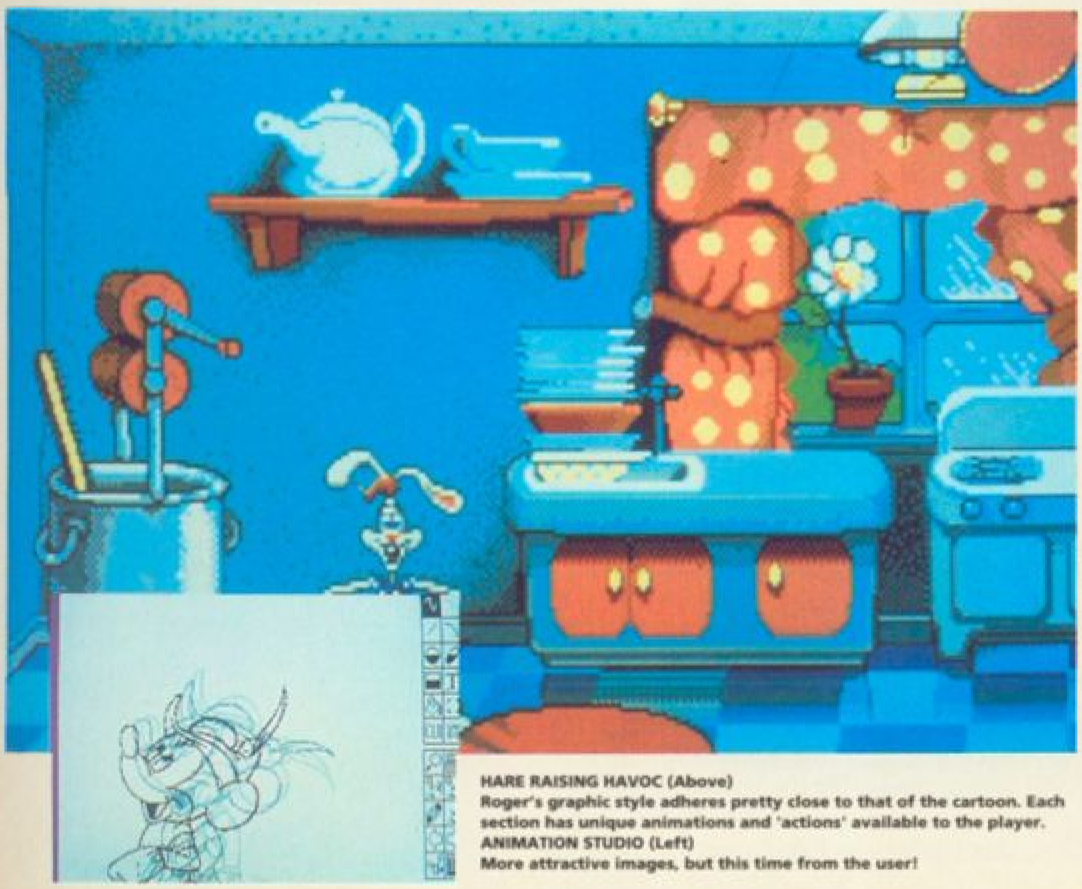
## DYNAMIX

Having wowed the adventuring populace with top-quality titles like *Rise of the Dragon* and *Heart of China*, and having astounded simulation fans with their super-detailed *Red Baron*, Dynamix are set to make a play for the hearts of, well, just about everyone else with their new outing, *The Adventures of Willy Beamish.*

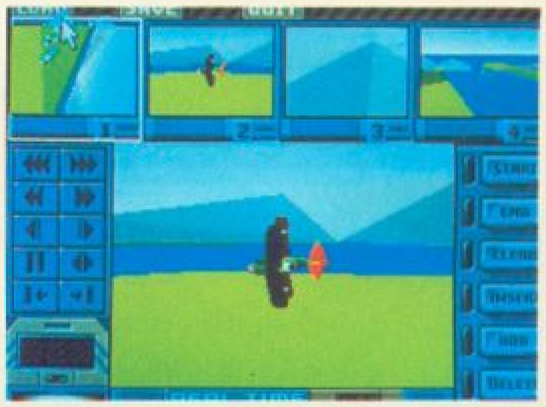
Billed as an 'interactive cartoon' this latest point-and-click extravaganza has a mischievous youngster as its hero, pitted against the sort of everyday trials and tribulations which American teenagers seem to have to endure. It makes a nice chance to attack more lightweight problems instead of having to save the galaxy again. You must keep Willy out of detention, keep him away from the school bully, etc, etc.

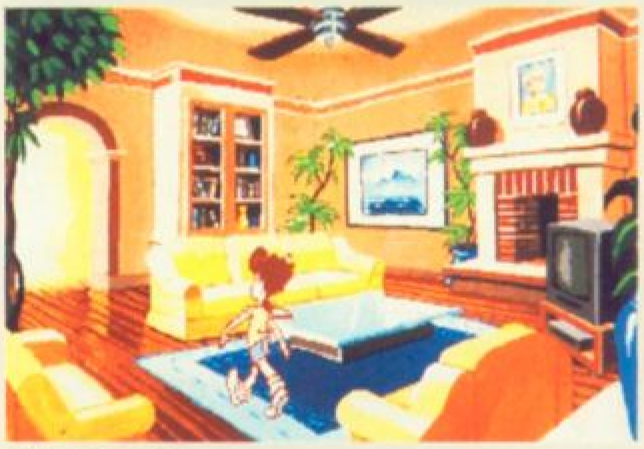
Imagine being able to control Kevin out of *The Wonder Years*, and you've got a pretty good idea of what goes on.

As yet, extremely little information is available on the title, but as you can see from the pictures, the graphic artists have gone to no small effort and the environment Willy has to play around in looks entertaining enough.



**HARE RAISING HAVOC (Above)**
**Roger's graphic style adheres pretty close to that of the cartoon. Each section has unique animations and 'actions' available to the player.**
**ANIMATION STUDIO (Left)**
**More attractive images, but this time from the user!**

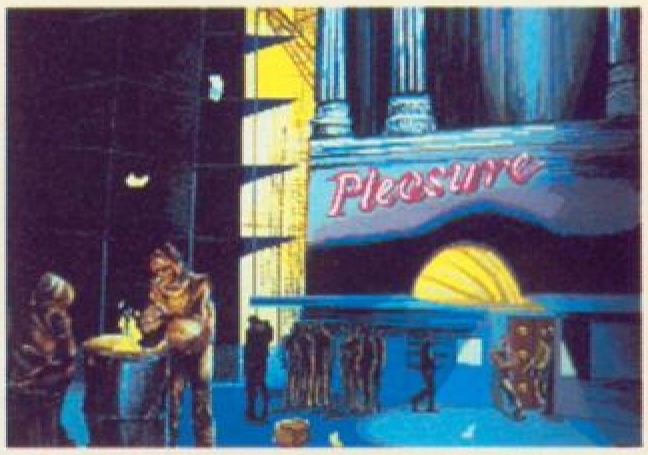




**STUNT ISLAND (Top)**
**Fly dramatic missions and film yourself in the process! Only in America...**
**WILLY BEAMISH (Above)**
**Will ya just *look* at those graphics?!**

## AND THE REST

Amiga owners who have been salivating over PC versions of *Heart of China* can catch up on Dynamix earlier blockbuster *Rise of the Dragon* come the summer. Clearly, the game looks pretty stunning, and any space-'tec worth his salt would be wise to invest in it. Versions of Stella 7 and Trial by Fire are also on the way.



**RISE OF THE DRAGON**
**Amiga owners will shortly be able to enjoy the exploits of the future private investigator as he tracks down evil drug barons and exposes conspiracy on the highest level. Phew!**

# LAFFING IN

**Larry 'Leisure Suit' Laffe has given his name to a revolutionary 'Electroni Themepark'. Steve Cook investigates new world of multi-player mayhem and blows a few wolf whistles at the forthcoming *Leisure Suit Larry 5*...**

'All I wanted to do,' claims Al Lowe, 'was to poke fun at the kind of man who goes around looking for single girls.' He ended up by single-handedly defining a whole new market for computer entertainment.

That market comprised the millions of PC owners who, before the launch of *Leisure Suit Larry*, spent their time on spreadsheets and databases. Given the chance to get to fourth base between the sheets instead, it's not surprising that they spread Larry onto hard disks across the country with all the speed of a virulent disease. Once the punters had got used to Larry, they began to look further afield, launching a British PC games market while Laffer and his pals made it onto ST and Amiga to equally great acclaim.

Meanwhile, here's the creator of everyone's favourite lounge lizard beaming at me from the confines of a small chair in the Sierra booth at CES. Impeccably dressed and exceedingly rotund, he's telling me all about the new Sierra Network system – and I'm failing to take proper notes. This is because, whenever I look at Mr Lowe, I keep seeing Larry himself, after about 4000 Indian takeaways. This, as you can imagine, is rather disturbing.

Al's now telling me about *Leisure Suit Larry 5*, his beam growing impossibly broader, and I'm still not taking notes – this time because I'm fascinated by the clothes he's wearing. Larry – sorry, Al – is so impeccably got-up that the taylor must have sewed the clothes straight onto his body. Either that or Al sprinkled some sort of powder on himself last night and the whole rig just grew on him, like skin on an onion. Whatever, sartorial presentation like this is not often encountered, especially on someone so...so... 'Now Larry One,' Al's saying, 'is very rounded...' ...rounded. Exactly. Just the word I was looking for. By this stage, as you can see, I was completely out of it. This man doesn't just create award-winning game characters, he IS one! Instead of coming up with questions, I kept having to stifle an urge to click on him. Any moment now, I was thinking, he's going to do a hardware rotate-and-magnify on me and it'll be all over...

In the event, it was all over – thanks to Al's busy schedule. But luckily for you and me, I managed to tape the interview so the complete lack of notes doesn't prevent us from bringing you two pages of red hot Larry news, plus details of the superlative *Police Quest III* and other Sierra undertakings. Enjoy.

## FROM THREE TO FIVE...

Instead of mindlessly following the crowd by bringing out *Leisure Suit Larry 4* after *Leisure Suit Larry 3*, Al Lowe has decided to skip four altogether and knock us all sideways with *Leisure Suit Larry 5*.

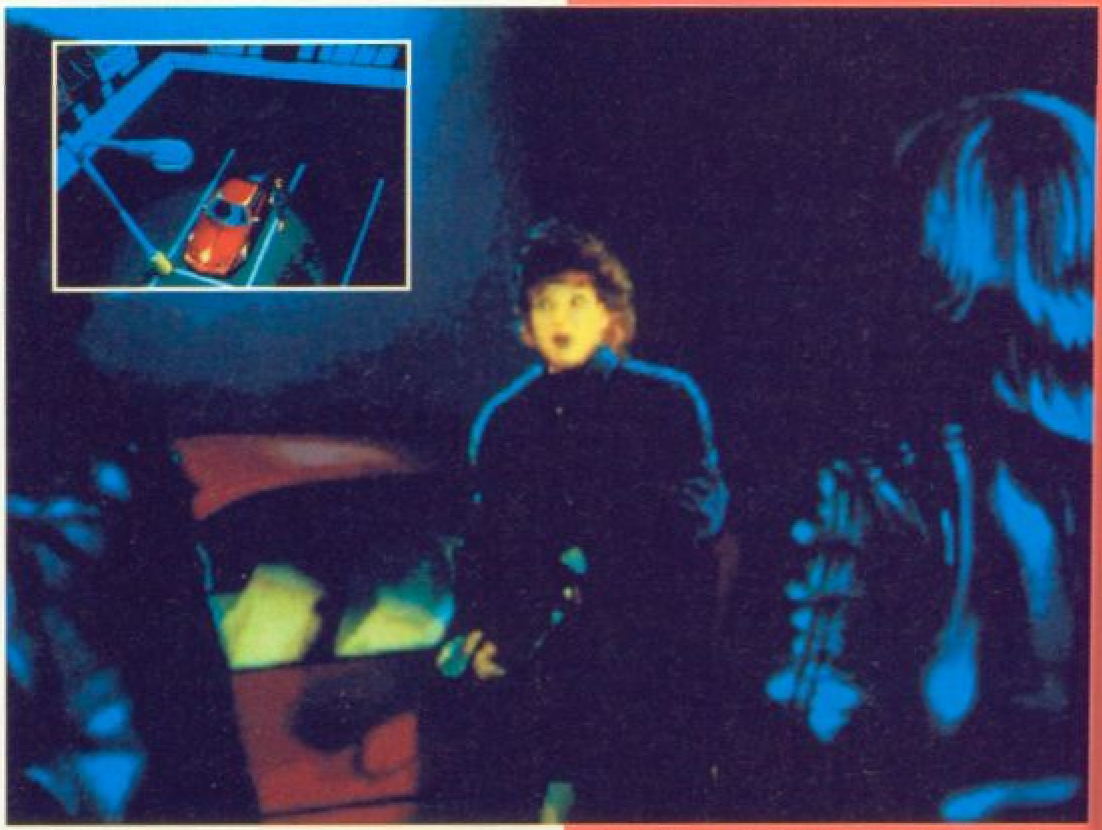
'Larry One,' says Al (as you can read elsewhere in this piece), 'is very rounded. In five minutes you can see most of the game. There are some two dimensional and three dimensional puzzles (i.e. problems which require more than one action or element to solve them) but for the most part the game is not sequential.' In other words, you can keep on wandering through the different locations solving puzzles here and there without having to tackle the game's challenges in a particular order.

'In Larry Two, however,' continues Al, 'I purposely went for a more plot-oriented game, and that gives you rather less freedom. Then in Larry Three I wanted the puzzles to be more independent of each other again. The Patty part was very sequential but the first half wasn't.' 'Now, in Larry Five, you get four different scenarios as well as a Patty adventure game. Patty has a series of puzzles in the game but in fact they

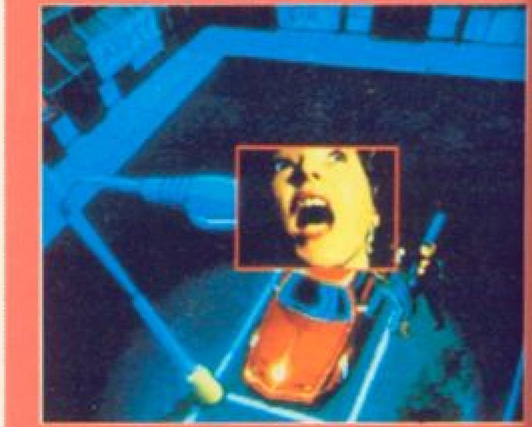
## OLDIES NOW GOLDIES...

**Those of use who missed *Leisure Suit Larry* first time round, or who turned down the first chance of *Space Quest*'ing may be interested to hear of two superlative upgraded versions of these games. Both *Leisure Suit Larry* and *Space Quest 1* have been run through the Sierra studios a second time, acquiring 256 colours and sexy soundtracks in the process. Other graphic improvements include a new animation style and false perspective on the backdrops. Any old Larry'ers or Space Quest'ers who've got the original releases can secure the new versions on a payment of a special upgrade fee. Contact Sierra on 0734 303322 for details.**

> 'If I was retired right now, I'd apply for a job as a programmer at Sierra.'
>
> **Ken Williams, President, Sierra.**



**Police Quest III's opening sequence is stunning enough without the sound, but once that siren starts blaring you'l be thanking your bank manager for letting you splash out on the soundboard. The game uses similar 'picture in picture' graphic storytelling techniques to Dynamix' Heart of China. Combined with soundboard compatible digitised voices, this makes for compelling – even disturbing – viewing...and that's before the game's even started. Here the victim is assaulted in an empty parking lot and, below, th screams are only just beginning...**



## SOUND THAT SIREN!

*Police Quest III – The Kindred* bursts onto ST, PC, and Amiga screens this autumn in the latest all-singing, all-digitised instalment of Jim Walls' superlative detective series. Sierra claim that this 256-colour number is '...closer to an interactive movie experience than any Sierra product to date.' And there's no doubt that the animated sequences we've seen so far are frighteningly good.

The plot once again puts you in the shoes of homicide detective Sonny Bonds, this time following a trail of bizarre ritual killings.

Presentation includes video-captured live actors and still photographs combined with an arresting musical soundtrack by Grammy Award winner Jan Hammer of Miami Vice fame. As with the other PQ games, the scenario is based on authentic law enforcement police procedures, forensics, and crime lab investigations.

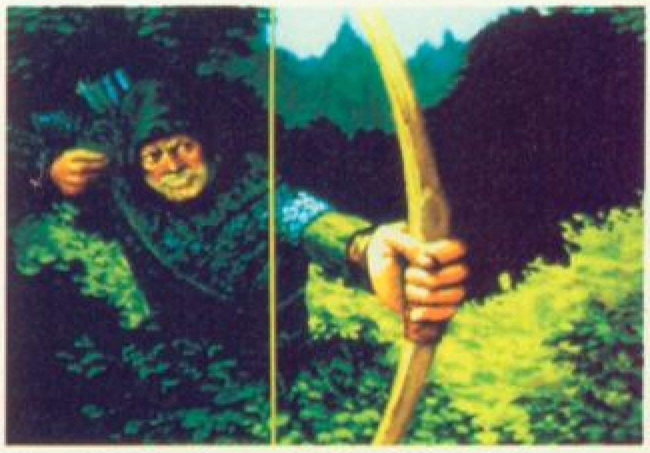
As you can read elsewhere on this spread, Sierra are continuing to prepare their products for release on CD-ROM. PQ3 is no exception: this floppy-disk version features, for example, superb lipsynch that will feature CD-quality voice-overs when the title hits the shiny disk market. You'll also be able to listen to it in five languages. Meanwhile, the floppy version should be out in late July.

don't have to be solved to complete it. I've also tried to tie in a series of fantasy situations that act as transitions between the different parts.' Larry is now working on a TV show entitled America's Sexiest Home Videos and has absolutely no idea what's become of Passionate Patti...or even a very clear idea of who she was. We leave the rest to your imagination. The real thing hits the shelves in September for the PC with Amiga and ST versions to follow.

### WELCOME TO LARRYLAND

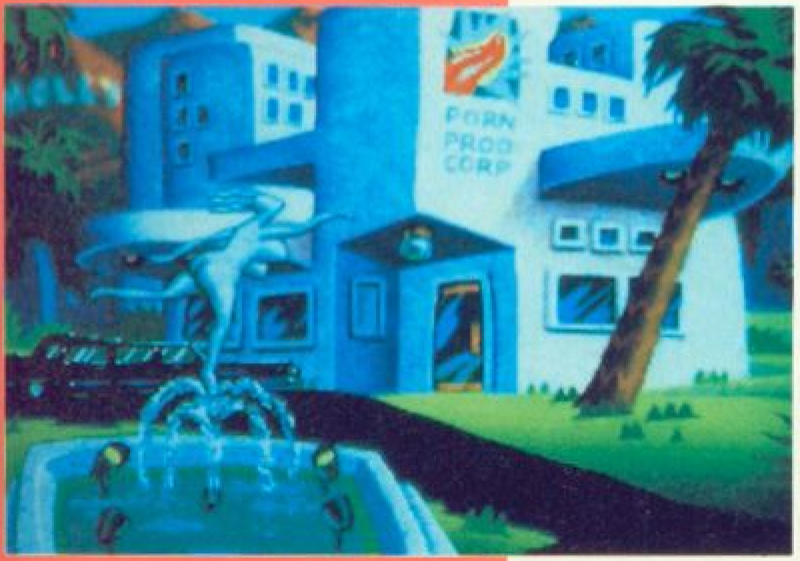
Remember MUD? Or Shades? These on-line multi-user games had a small but loyal band of followers in the UK. Their specialist fantasy environments, however, failed to endear them to a mass market, particularly since most of the market would have had to purchase a modem to play them.

In America, however, there are two vital factors that influence on-line gaming. First, modems are very widely spread: at least 40% of Sierra's customers, for example, have a PC with modem. Second, local calls are free!



Conquests of the Longbow presents the legend of Robin Hood , complete with narrative sequences (see one of the juicier ones below for an example), animated exploration, and mucho character interaction. The game designers used rotoscoping on the figures to get realistic animation for the human figures in the game. You also get 256 colours, loads of sound, and no connection with Kevin Costner's movie...

I say, I say what's going on here then! These two voyeuristic shots come from a sequence in which our Robin has succumbed to the mysterious charms of the fair Marian. Shades of Defender of the Crown, but without the see-thru nightie (thank heavens).



Larry 5 (left) looks superb in 256 colours, supporting Al Lowe's claim to deliver 'Better Babes Through Technology' (below). That's the man himself, bottom centre, who – despite our tongue-in-cheek description of him – is actually one of the genuinely jollier characters on the software scene. "The problem is," he says, "that we're all designing CD-ROM games...but we don't have CD-ROMS!"

# LARRYLAND

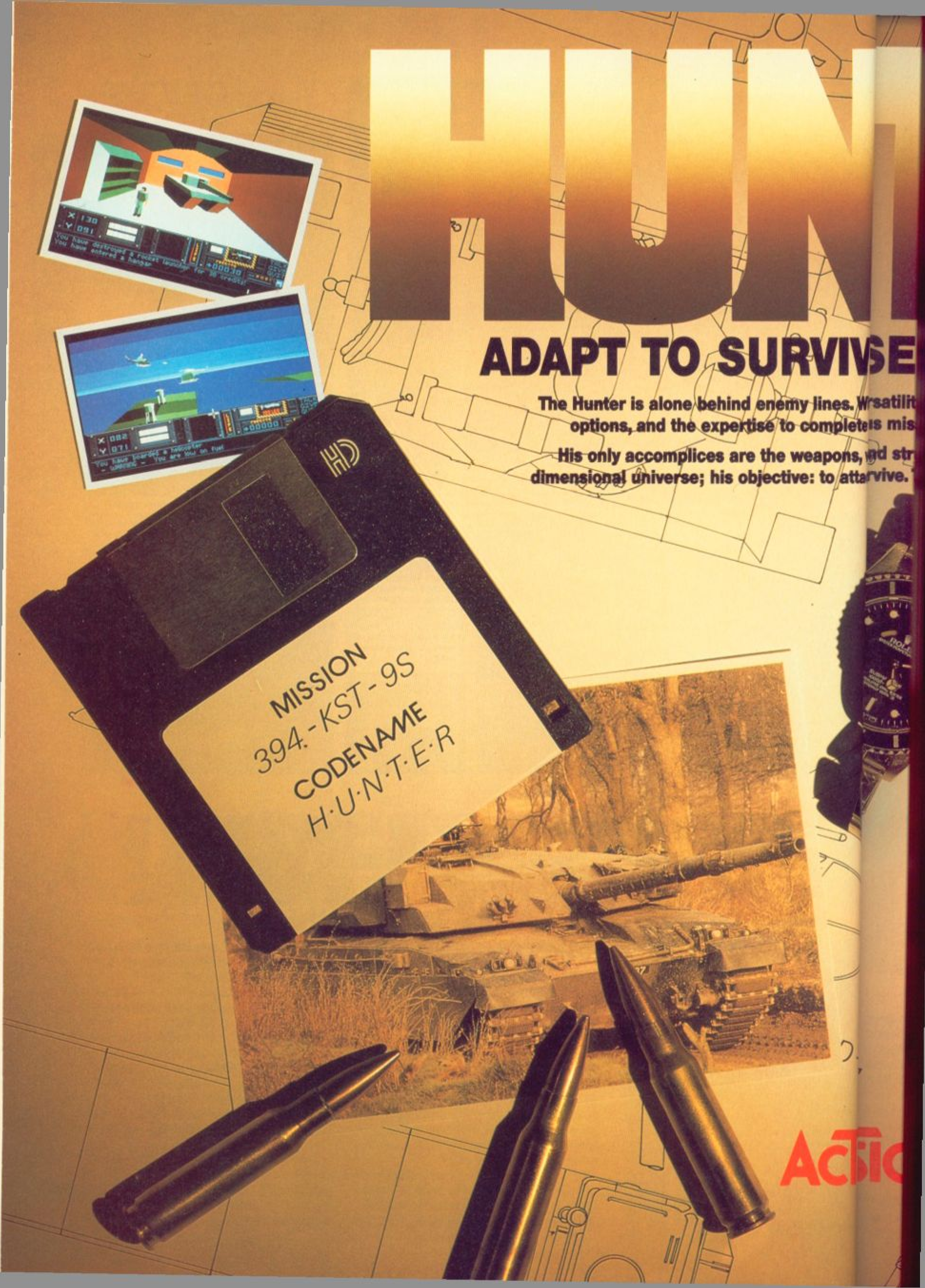
These statistics led Sierra to develop what they're calling a 'cyberspace themepark'. Currently only available in California, but under evaluation for release elsewhere in the States and in Europe, LarryLand and SierraLand are multi-user on-line systems that enable you to play games, chat up strangers, or even take on another player in a two player version of Dynamix' superlative *Red Baron.*

Currently there's a basic service that costs $11.95 a month and gives you the opportunity to 'meet' other users for bridge and other homely pastimes. For membership of the 'theme parks', which are due to be launched this summer, you pay an additional $6.50 each.

According to boss Ken Williams, '*SierraLand* is a cyberspace-based theme park for the whole family. We have traditional rides, like our White Water Expedition. We also have attractions, like the Sculpture Garden, where working alone of with friends you can create 3D sculptures that other park visitors can admire. There is even an electronic school house where children are rewarded for tutoring or working together on homework.'

As for LarryLand, 'You can drop by the casino,' proffers Ken, '...and for meeting people, you can hang out at Lefty's Bar. If you have a date and want to go dancing, we have a disco...'. Sounds disgustingly enjoyable.

If the idea of on-line gaming conjures up images of scrolling text-screens, think again because The Sierra Network is graphics based – and highly attractive. What's more, you can even design your own mug-shot for display on the system, so that all the other punters can be suitably impressed by your macho (or maidenly) appearance.


MISSION
394-KST-9S
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H·U·N·T·E·R
X 130
Y 091
X 082
Y 071
ACTIO

You have destroyed a rocket launcher for 30 credits!
You have entered a hangar

You have boarded a helicopter
- WARNING - You are low on fuel

# HUN

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options, and the expertise to completeis mis

His only accomplices are the weapons, nd str
dimensional universe; his objective: to attarvive.

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You have boarded a wind surfer
X 130
Y 060
You have taken some fibres
You have boarded a rocket boat

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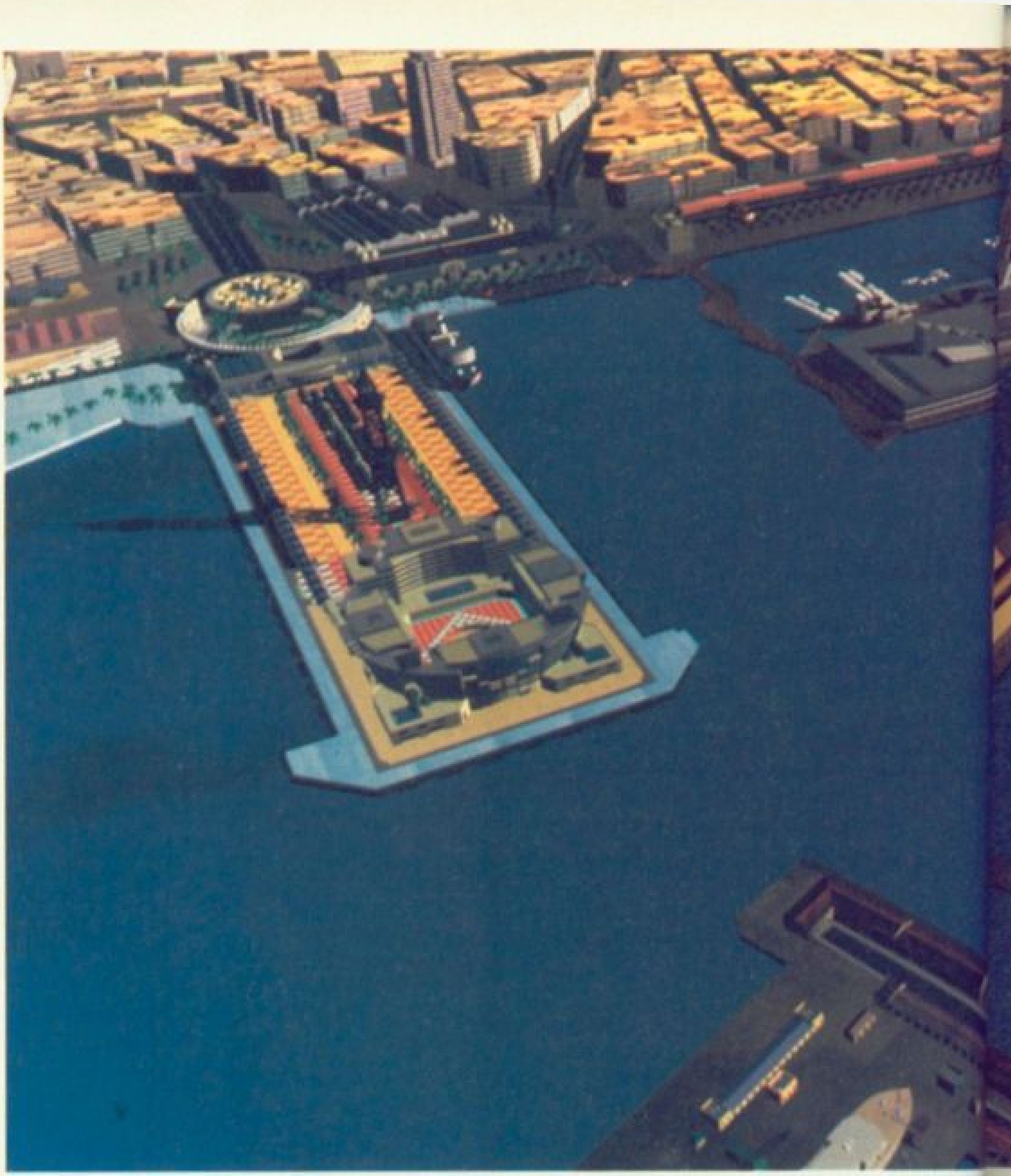
CTISION

Available in September on Amiga & Atari ST



# VIRTUA
# CITY

### ACE goes sight-seeing in Barcelona, the host city to the 1992 Olympics... before it's even been built!

Once building blocks whirling through space and forming the Channel 4 logo was considered the very epitome of gobsmacking. But times change, and these days it's easy to become very blasé about the quantity and quality of computer animation seen on TV and cinema. Joe Public barely raises a jaundiced eyebrow at seeing milk bottles come to life and merrily jaunt down a suburban street, or tea-pots sneaking around across a breakfast table. In a way, this complacency is a tribute to the skills and artistry of the many computer graphics companies now producing state-of-the-art animations for adverts or television show title sequences. One of the leading exponents of this relatively new commercial art is London-based Digital Pictures.

Digital Pictures was established way back in 1982 with just two staff. Since then the company has expanded dramatically and now employs fifteen animators and computer technicians. Recent commissions include commercials for Yoplait and Smarties, and the title sequence for Channel 4's Wired. Demanding as these projects were, they were nothing compared to the creation of a virtual Barcelona.

**CALL THE COMMISSIONER**

While the Olympics are the premiére sporting event for the World's athletes, they're also a major showcase for the host city. When Barcelona was awarded the honour of hosting the 1992 Games, major construction and rebuilding throughout the city was inevitable.

But when Port 2000 announced plans for a major redevelopment of the city's harbour and marina area, the reaction from Barcelona's citizens was mixed. To overcome this, Port 2000 commissioned the Spanish company Division Video to produce a 45-second commercial that would somehow convey the eventual positive benefits of the extensive construction work. The solution they came up with was a computer-generated flight around the 'new' Barcelona, centring on the port area. Which, of course, is where Digital Pictures came in.

Digital Pictures had already done similar work but of a much smaller scale for the DTI's British Pavilion at Seville and for a Hong Kong airport proposal, and their success with these two projects made them natural choices for the job. Kim Aldis, the project's Director and Chief Animator, describes the task as mammoth, adding: "This is the first time a whole city has been digitised and animated to this detail. We came to close with our animation of Hong Kong but this project has taken the idea one step further."

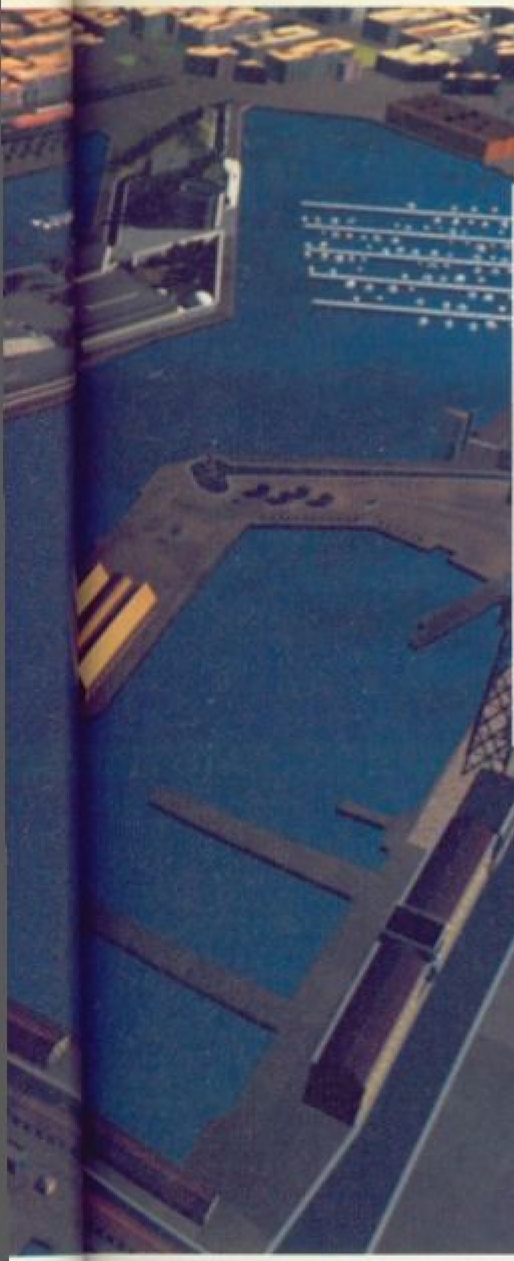
**GROW YOUR OWN CITY**

The first hurdle was collecting enough reference data. Kim spent some time in Barcelona taking photographic references of the city as it stands now and planning camera shots for the animation. In addition, street plans, architectural specifications and building plans were collated to provide a huge library of data.

Once back in London, Kim devised how the commercial would look. The idea was to start with an eight second live action tour around the area as it now stands, followed by thirty-two seconds of animation illustrating the eventual results of the current development work.

Meanwhile, the four other animators began the epic task of inputting the collected city data into Digital Picture's custom built DigiPix modelling software running on Silicon Graphics 4D20 graphic workstations. Digital Pictures have eight workstation at their disposal, each costing a cool £25,000. It's money well spent, though - each can generate a frame of animation to TV resolution from a sixteen million colour palette in just thirty minutes. Compare that to an Amiga!

Port 2000 wanted the animations to give the impression of the city 'growing' as the commercial progressed. This was achieved using various techniques, including animated texture maps fading up from transparent to fully



opaque and adding detail, polygon by polygon, to each frame. The expanses of water were modelled using bump maps and 'cloud' shadows passed over the surface to provide an authentic 'look'.

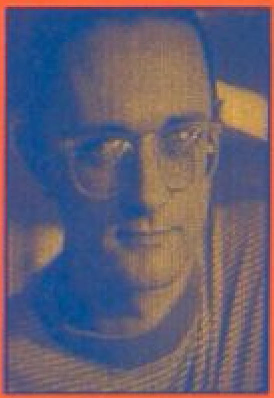
The end result? A stunning fast-moving flight over Barcelona, its new buildings and piazzas forming as the viewer swoops and dives over the city. Just take a look at these stills to get a sense of the complexity and intricate detail of this superb animation.

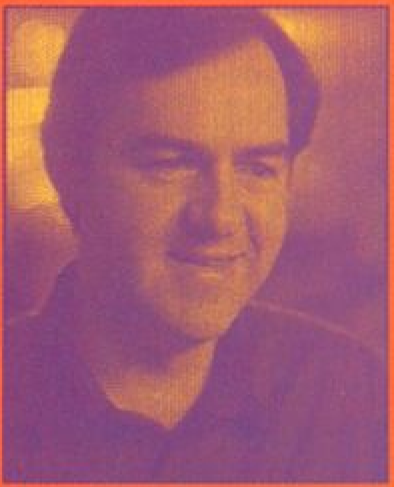
### THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

The quality of these images begs the question: Just how far away are full-length movies completely generated by computer? It's a question that generated a great deal of discussion at Digital Pictures. Generating photo-realistic images of man-made objects such as buildings and streets is completely feasible (take a look at the shots on this page!), and natural phenomena such as trees, clouds, mountains and fire can all be closely modelled. The big stumbling block are humans and animals. Generating a, say, human face is incredibly difficult, due to the complex mechanics governing the way it moves and looks. But that day will come... and ACE will be there to tell you all about it!

● **David Upchurch**

## THE DREAM TEAM





*(top to bottom)*

***Kim Aldis***
***Chief Animator/***
***Project Manager/***
***Director***

***Alec Knox***
***Senior Animator***

***Jan Pinkava***
***Animator***

***Chris Barrett***
***Animator***

***Damien Steel***
***Animator***

***David Lomax***
***Software***

# T2
THE MOVIE

**It's taken seven years, but Schwarzenegger is back in style as the fearless, ruthless, relentless killing machine in *Terminator 2* - and the game's promising to be every bit as hard. ACE prepares for Judgment Day...**

# TERMIN

Intent on John Connor's destruction, the T1000 looks on ominously during the apocalyptic steel mill confrontation.

Forget the SAS - if you want anything blown up or shot, movie director James Cameron's your man. Despite his diminutive frame, he's been responsible for some of the most spectacular science fiction films of the 80s - but none that have had such an Earth-shattering effect as the sci-fi classic which rocketed both him and Arnold Schwarzenegger to stardom in 1984 - *The Terminator*.

The story of an emotionless and unstoppable cyborg sent from the future to eliminate the mother of a future resistance leader is still hailed today as a science fiction landmark - although the way in which the movie closes without any loose ends and Cameron's insistence not to produce a sequel made a second instalment seem lunlikely. But seven years later, it's happened - partly because of Cameron's renewed interested in the project and partly because of the almost

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# T2
## THE MOVIE

(Left) Man, machine... or something else entirely? One thing's for certain, there's no messing with the T1000, caught here while changing from liquid back to "human" form. The T1000 first takes on the shape he requires, then "colours himself in". It's an effect that really has to be seen to be believed.

(Below left) For *Terminator 2*, writer/director James Cameron asked for special effects that were, in his own words, "just at the edge of what was possible", and then employed five separate SFX companies to ensure that he got them - $750,000 was spent on computer software alone. We think you'll agree the investment was worth it when you see effects like THIS of the T1000 doing one of his many party pieces up on the big screen.

(Below) Just one of the many vehicles to be crashed, squashed and blown up during the course of *Terminator 2*.

cast-iron certainty that such a sequel would pack in punters ten-to-a-seat.

That second factor is actually considerably more important than first impressions suggest. *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is officially the most expensive movie EVER MADE, weighing in at over a hundred million dollars! Such is the enormity of the investment that's been made, the entire future of currently production company Carolco hangs in the balance. If the movie bombs (admittedly extremely unlikely) Carolco could well go down with it.

# ATOR 2

Information about the movie itself is incredibly tight - so tight in fact, that every copy of the script, which has been described by Cameron himself as "the Pentagon Papers", has a huge red serial number stamped across every page, so if any copies turn up in the wrong hands, Carolco can trace it back to the original owner. However, despite such tight-lipped security, ACE has exclusively obtained details as to what *Terminator 2* is all about...

### THE STORY

In the post-apocalypse future, where the war between man and machine rages, resistance leader John Connor (son of Sarah) gets wind of another complicated plot to have him killed in the past by means of time travel. So when the rebels capture a T800 Terminator, Connor has it reprogrammed with instructions to protect him. The T-800 infiltrates the Cyberdyne Systems HQ and sends itself back in time to Los Angeles 1994 (when Connor is a mere 10-year old boy) to do battle with the new, even tougher Terminator - the T1000.

But hold on a minute - where does Arnie come into all this? Since he got squashed at the end of the original movie, you might think it a little difficult to bring him back with a feasible excuse for the sequel. But the problem has been cleverly navigated by Cameron and co-writer William Wisher. You see, ALL T800 Terminators look exactly the same - ie just like Arnie, and that includes the one captured and sent back to protect Connor. So what follows in the movie is Arnold having a right old ding-dong with his more sophisticated rival - one desperately trying to kill the Connor boy, and the other trying to keep him alive.

Protecting the boy and her mother (played once more by Linda Hamilton), is no easy task, considering the opposition Arnie finds himself up against. The T1000 Terminator 2 (played by newcomer Robert Patrick) is not a robot at all, but a being constructed of a new super-alloy with the same slippery qualities as Mercury - which means it can dissolve and restructure itself to look like any person or object. Not only that, but bullets pass through its body like water.

The reason for the T1000's watery properties would seem not to be for any particular script requirement, but as an excuse to make use of some stunning special effects. Audiences were so impressed by the amazing computer-generated "water-snake" in Cameron's *The Abyss* that it seemed impossible to resist using it again, this time in an even more elaborate form - catch the trailer, which is currently dropping jaws in cinemas around the country for a taste of what we're talking about. But while all this sounds pretty amazing, effects like these don't come cheap. The computer-generated T1000, along with the rest of the special effects, ate up an incredible $17 million of the production budget - that's more than an average movie costs to make altogether!

***Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is already out in America by the time you read this (providing it hasn't slipped from its July 4th opening date), and is released in the UK on Friday August 16th. So get queueing...**

(Above) This is not the only large explosion you'll see in *Terminator 2* - the film is jam-packed with state-of-the-art pyrotechnics.

(Left) The steel mill - the final battleground for Arnie and his awesome adversary. This shot give some idea of the movie's scale. With a hundred mill to spend, why not splash out a little?

(Left) The young John Connor may look like a littl snot now, but he'll be a key player in the man vs machine war of the future - unless the T1000 can get to him first.

(Right) Yes, it's Arnie - he may not be quite as sophisti cated as his liquid-alloy foe, but as this shot shows, he can still take one hell of a beating.

(Left) All friends together? Even with his hand missing, Arnie isn't about to let the T1000 get his liquid mitts on Sarah and John Connor without a fight - which of course is exactly what he gets.

## JAMES CAMERON FILMOGRAPHY

**PIRANHA 2: THE SPAWNING (1981)**
Low budget, low-quality sequel to Joe Dante's horror spoof - this tim around the Piranhas sprout wings and fly about, attacking people on land. Oh dear...

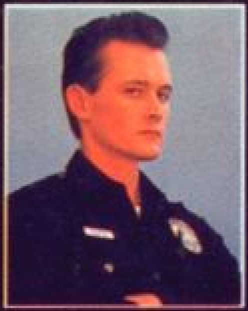
**THE TERMINATOR (1984)**
The classic. Made for a paltry six million dollars, it shot Big Arnie from fame to superstardom and quickly became THE cult science-fiction movie of the 80s, spawning a host of awful rip-off "tribute" movies. An essential video purchase, it's a shame it was so heavily edited whe shown by the BBC.

**ALIENS (1986)**
Cameron's second sequel to someone else's movie, this time followin up Ridley Scott's 1979 sci-fi horror classic. This Time It's War with lots more acid-spewing insectoids and Cameron buddies Michael Biehn, Bi Paxton and Lance Henriksen turning up from The Terminator to play rock-hard space commandos. Originally twenty minutes longer befor it was cut for cinema release, a fully-restored Special Edition was supposed to be released on video last year, but strangely, it never appeared...

**THE ABYSS (1989)**
Cameron goes from bang-bang-death to kissy-kissy-love with question able success as a group of underwater oil miners encounter friendly pink aliens with magical powers. Michael Biehn appears again as a ps chotic Navy SEAL, alongside some stunning computer-generated effects. Originally three hours long, it was again cut to satisfy cash-hungry cinema owners - which meant losing the apparently spectacul scene where the aliens get riled and almost wipe out a whole city wit a giant tidal wave.

**TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY (1991)**
Don't be ridiculous. Read the feature.

(Above) Don't expect to see Sarah Connor as the timid little thing you remember from the first movie - she's spent the last ten years turning herself into the female equivalent of Rambo. It's a good thing too, as against a fellow as tough as the T1000, even Arnie could do with a helping hand.



(Left) "Are you looking at me?" Meet the awesome Terminator 2 himself - alias actor Robert Patrick.

## THE BIG MAN

Though Arnie has been coming on in leaps and bounds in terms of money-earning of late, the bill he's put in for his work on Terminator 2 is staggering by even his standards! Arnie knows how to negotiate a movie deal, and he picked up a hefty paycheck and a share of the profits for his last Carolco project, Total Recall (another of the world's most expensive movies). For Terminator 2 though, things went through the roof. Obviously keen to keep on Arnie's good side, Carolco didn't even bat an eyelid at paying the big man a cool $15 million for his efforts, and even threw in a personal buttering-up gift of a private jet plane! Think about that the next time you pick up your squalid little wage packet...

## THE TERMINATOR 2

And you thought the original Terminator was hard? Pah! Arnie's nothing but a big girl's blouse compared to the new T1000 Terminator 2. The big surprise is that, unlike Arnie, the new model doesn't come equipped with bulging biceps and pulsating pecs. In his normal "human" guise, he looks like just a regular guy - a little skinny in fact. But don't be put off by the diminutive frame - here are just some of the ROCK HARD things he gets up to during the course of the movie:

***CRASHES*** out of the top floor of a skycraper on a motorbike, leaping onto the side of a helicopter hovering outside!

***SLURPS*** through the side of the helicopter in watery form then restructures himself and "disposes" of the pilot and then crashes the helicopter into the back of a truck!

***DRIVES*** a truck after the young John Connor on his moped, crashing it over a bridge in the process!

***USES*** his molecular properties to imitate all sorts of things, including the entire floor of a room!

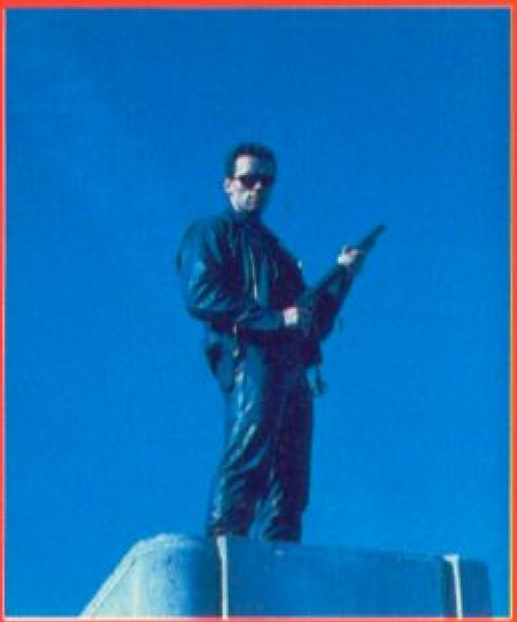
***TURNS*** his index finger into a three-foot spike, and

***GETS*** shot in the head with a shotgun, but is all right!

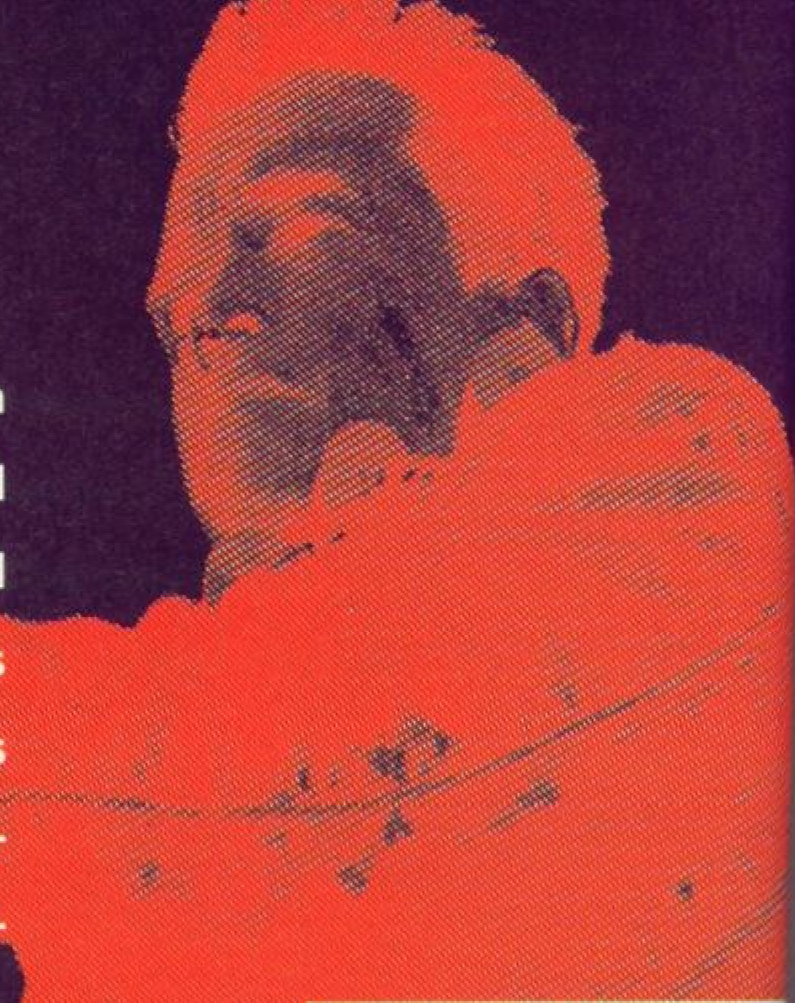
You may be wondering how if T2 is so hard, how a relatively weedy machine like Arnie could dispose of him. We know what happens but we're not going to tell you!

## TERMINATOR TRIVIA

1. In the original movie's sequences where we see through the "eyes" of The Terminator, the computer data that scrolls down the sides of the screen is in fact 6502 Machine Code!
2. Terminator 2's co-screenwriter William Wisher had a hand in the original movie. He provided dialogue for the police station scenes and also played the unfortunate policeman who has his head smacked against the door of his cop car by Big Arnie.
3. The motorbike ridden by Arnie in Terminator 2 is to be the premiere attraction in a new movie-memorabilia restaurant called Planet Hollywood. It's a chain of cafes all around the world, financed by Arnold and his circle of tinseltown buddies and due to open this Autumn. Just think, YOU could touch that very bike. Phwoooar...
4. The Terminator is REALLY GOOD.
5. But not as good as Terminator 2 is going to be!



# T2
## THE GAME



**With the movie brimming with some of the most expensive and amazing special effects ever, and only a month to go before its theatrical release, how on *earth* is OCEAN hoping to do 16-bit justice to James Cameron's hundred-million dollar epic?**

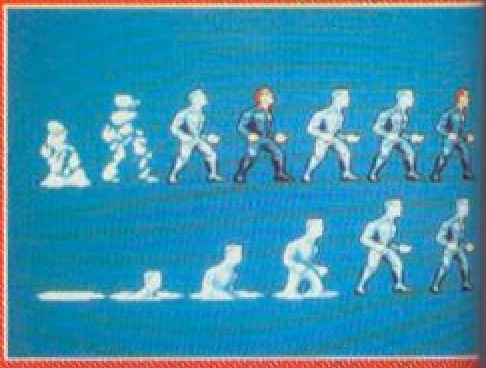
The enviable task of adapting Cameron's forthcoming epic into a computer game fell to rapidly-evolving development house Dimentia, and in particular the company's co-head Kevin Bulmer. It's a double serving of luck for Kevin as not only is it a particularly pristine conversion job to secure, there's a personal factor too - Kevin is a self-confessed Terminator enthusiast. "I love it. I've got the video of the first film on my shelf here, along with a model of the Terminator robot and all the paraphenalia."

With the help of his Dimentia cronies, Kevin's been responsible in the past for games such as *Gauntlet II*, *Golden Axe* and Core Design's blockbusting debut *Corporation* - and it was the latter that got him a shot at *Terminator 2*. "We got lots of offers of work after we did *Corporation*, one of which was from Ocean to do *Terminator 2*. To be honest I wasn't too keen at first because we had other projects anyway and there's less money to be made out of doing conversion work than original games. But I went up to Ocean to talk about it around the middle of January, and they gave me the movie script to read. As soon as I had finished reading it, I was sold on the project. It was like 'hold everything, I have to do this game.'"

It wasn't until work began on the game that it became apparent that the almost unrealistically tight-lipped security surrounding the movie wasn't going to help matters. "We started off working from just the script," Kevin explains, "and from that we were able to pick out scenes that would make good games. But when it comes to actually writing the game and doing the graphics, the script is not enough. For example, there's a scene in the film where a helicopter chases a van down a street, which we've used in the game. But the script just says 'helicopter', so how do I know what colour to draw it, or even what kind of helicopter it is?"

Fortunately, matters became a little clearer in March when Dimentia saw the movie trailer, which, as luck would have it, has snippets from most of the action scenes that Dimentia had selected for use in the game. It also came in handy for giving a better idea of the movie's tone and style, and for digitising frames to use between levels.

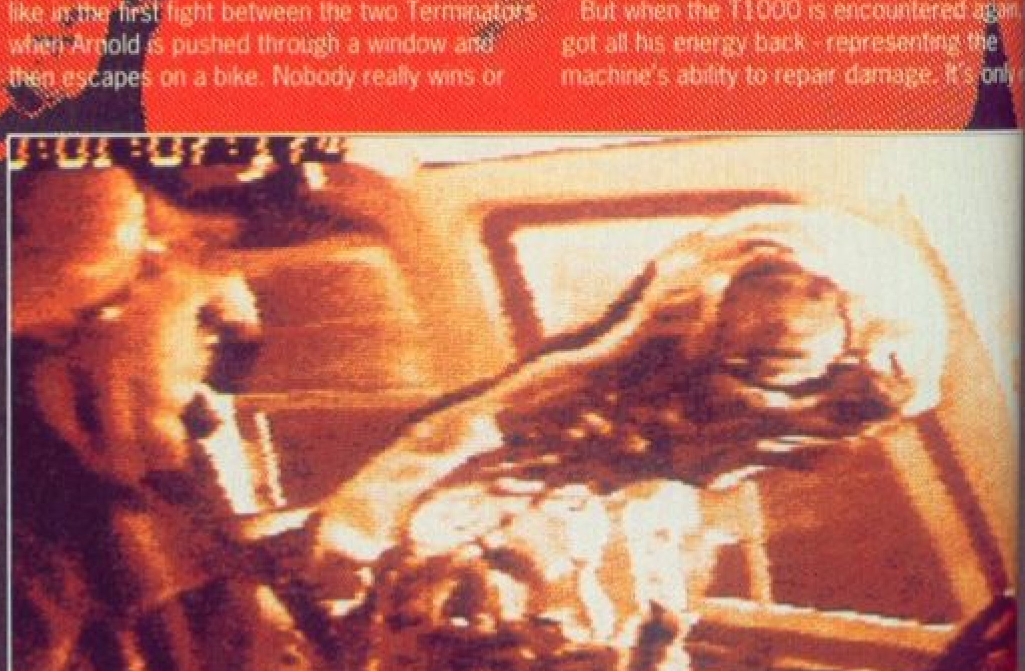
The game itself is a level based affair - six action-based and two puzzle games dotted around in-between. "So far as the movie's concerned, the action is actually very restrictive as it's a running one-on-one battle between Arnold and the T1000 for pretty much all the way," says Kevin. "One of the problems we faced was working out how to end a level. In the film, it's often a fluke that ends a combat set-piece - like in the first fight between the two Terminators when Arnold is pushed through a window and then escapes on a bike. Nobody really wins or

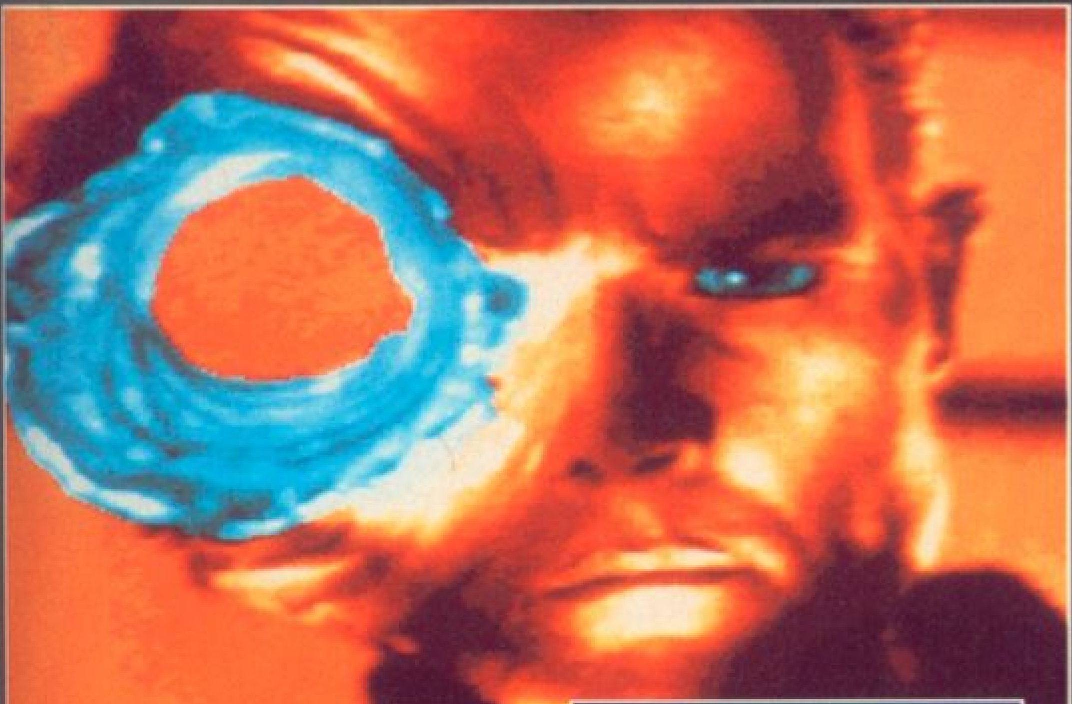


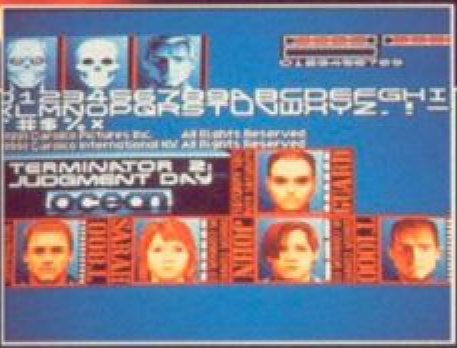
loses, so how do you translate that into a g

The fact that the T1000 is practically inv
didn't make things any easier, so Dimentia
changed the rules a little. For each comba
round, the T1000 has 16 "lives", and when
they've been depleted he becomes dormant
allowing the player to escape to the next le

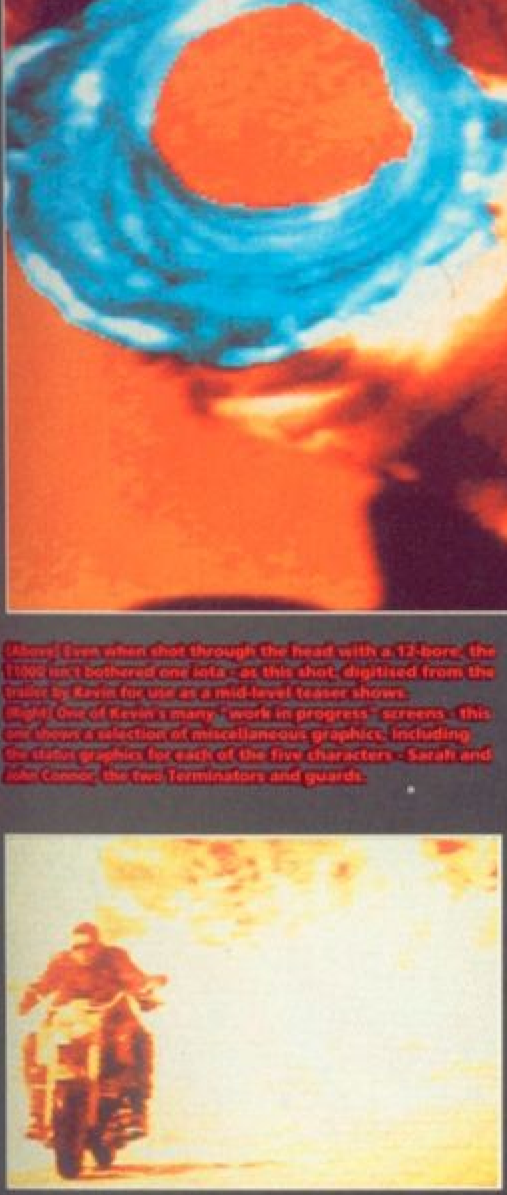
But when the T1000 is encountered agai
got all his energy back - representing the
machine's ability to repair damage. It's onl







(Above) Even when shot through the head with a 12-bore, the T1000 isn't bothered one iota - as this shot, digitised from the trailer by Kevin for use as a mid-level teaser shows.
(Right) One of Kevin's many "work in progress" screens - this one shows a selection of miscellaneous graphics, including the status graphics for each of the five characters - Sarah and John Connor, the two Terminators and guards.



final scene that the T1000 becomes vulnerable and he can actually be vanquished.

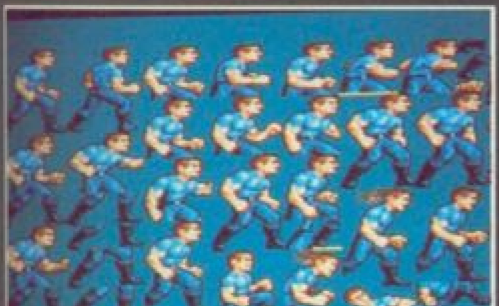
As a *Terminator* fan, Kevin's always had a clear idea about what he wanted to do with his game. "The big thing about *The Terminator* that always impressed me was the idea of a robot covered in human flesh. So what I've wanted to do is juxtapose the robot/human images as much as possible, like in the "repair eye" subgame, even though it's not such a prominent feature in the film. When Arnold gets hit by bullets you see little points of silver beneath the skin, and later on, as he becomes more damaged, you see more of the robot exoskeleton."

Graphically, Kevin has gone for big, chunky sprites and frame-intensive animation - which though very memory intensive and a programming pain, has been well worth it in his view.

"What annoys me is that in all the previous Arnie games, with the exception of *Red Heat*, he's been drawn as a tiny little sprite, and that's not what he's about at all. So for *Terminator 2* I've drawn him as a giant character - there's no other way to give him any screen presence. I wanted him to have a powerful and muscular presence, a sense of weight so that when he punches someone, you really get the feeling that that punch could knock you off your feet."

Now that most of the graphics and storyboarding are taken care of, Kevin is working round the clock sorting out the finer points of the gameplay and generally getting everything together.

"It's about 80-85% finished at the moment. The biggest headache has been getting all these graphics working properly. Each character has about 93 animation frames - that's Arnold, the T1000, Sarah Connor, the nurses in the asylum scene, the police - it's a hell of a lot of graphics." Ocean is hoping to have the game released in America in time for the movie's theatrical release over there in early July. Once it's all finished, Kevin will be moving onto another Dimentia project, this time for US Gold, which is due for release in the middle of 1992. "It's called Monstrum Horendrum, which is latin for Horrible Monsters. It's a role playing adventure that's got the most amazing VGA textured shading you've ever seen." Find out more in a full ACE report next month. We'll be back...



(Above) Big Arnie in Kevin's work-in-progress sprite screen. Notice how Arnie is not drawn as a single character, but put together from several component elements. In this way Arnie is able to perform a wider range of actions, more efficiently.
(Left) Another of Kevin's digitised scenes - this is one of the movie's more spectacular SFX sequences when the T1000 "shmoozes" through the side of a police helicopter.

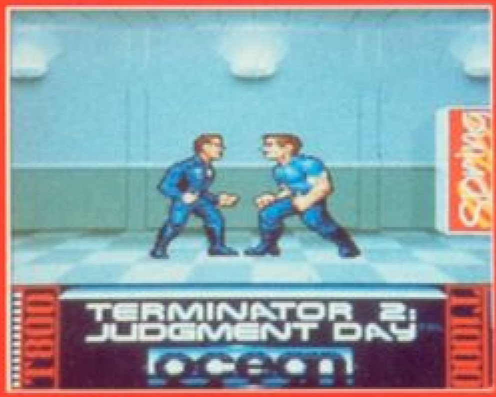
# T2

THE GAME

## IT'S GAMETIME! Here's a level-by-level breakdown of exactly what would-be Arnies will be facing in *Terminator 2*.

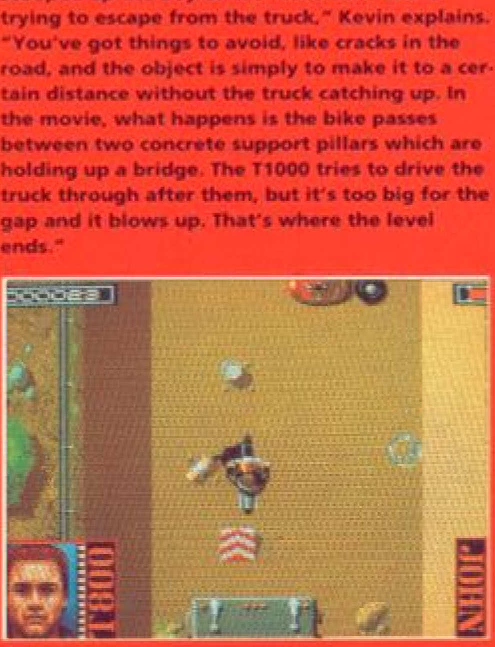
### LEVEL 1

**The first level takes place in the corridor of an arcade, recreating the first major confrontation between Arnold and the T1000. It's described by Kevin as an "instinctive" beat'em up because of the innovative way in which the combat works. The moves available to you depend both on the range between the two combatants and the damage level of your opponent. Kicks, punches and headbutts are all at your disposal, but since the T1000 is indestructible, the best you can do is try to survive by wearing him down - once he's dormant, you progress to the next level.**

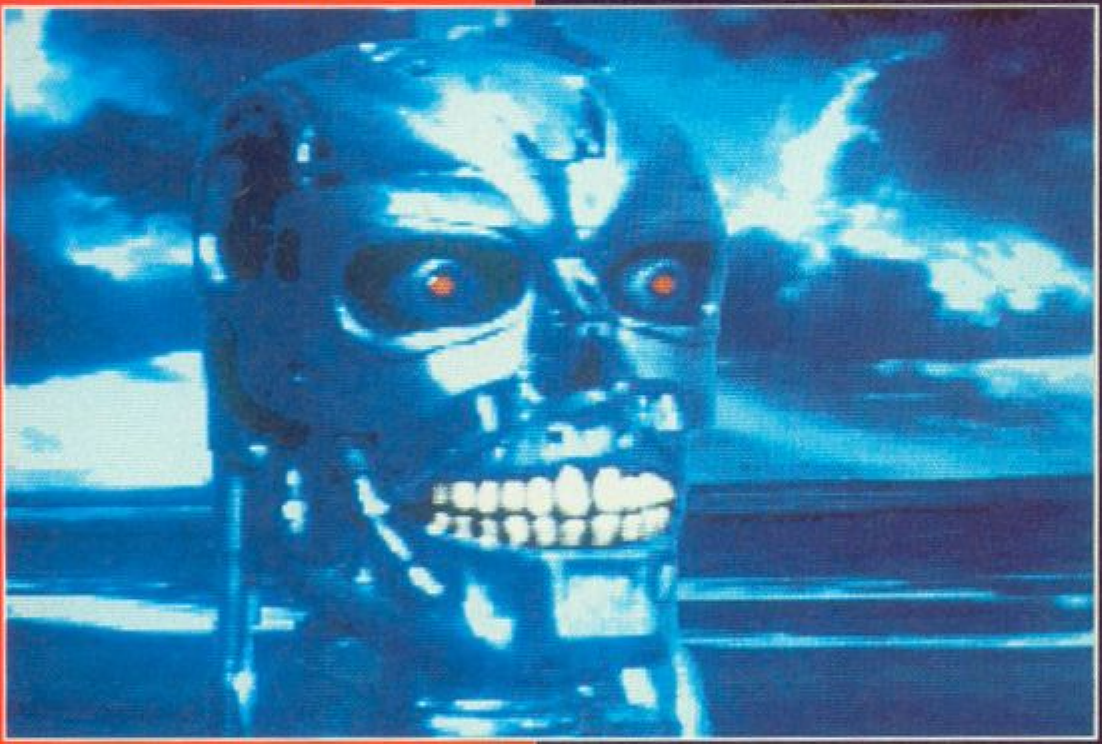


### LEVEL 2

**The first of the game's two chase sequences recreates the scene where the T1000, driving a stolen truck, chases the young John Connor on his moped down a flood control channel, while Arnie, on his motorbike, attempts to protect the boy. "We pick up the action just as Arnold has scooped up the boy on his motorbike and is trying to escape from the truck," Kevin explains. "You've got things to avoid, like cracks in the road, and the object is simply to make it to a certain distance without the truck catching up. In the movie, what happens is the bike passes between two concrete support pillars which are holding up a bridge. The T1000 tries to drive the truck through after them, but it's too big for the gap and it blows up. That's where the level ends."**



# T2
## THE GAME

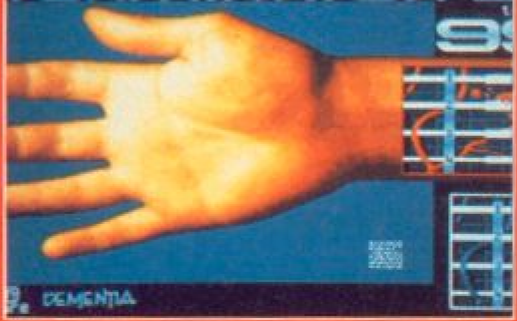


## LEVEL 3

Time to engage those grey cells as the action is temporarily interrupted by a more sedate and taxing puzzle scene - this is a bit of an oddity, as the inspiration for the scene actually came from the first movie.

"In the film, there's a scene where the futuristic John Connor repograms the captured Terminator to protect him in the past. But it's all done at the back of Arnold's head, which wouldn't make a very interesting graphic," says Kevin. "So instead I've taken the scene from the first film where Arnold does repair work on his damaged arm. It's a little puzzle where you have to swap adjacent tiles in a grid, which represent the "tendons" in the arm.

"As you make the right connections the fingers start to twitch, and when you solve the puzzle completely, the whole hand flexes. You don't actually win or lose, but the more of the puzzle you solve, the more damage you get back for the next level." Kevin digitised his own arm, fingers flexing, to produce this scene, and though it wasn't easy, he's confident the resultant graphical effect will "turn a few heads."



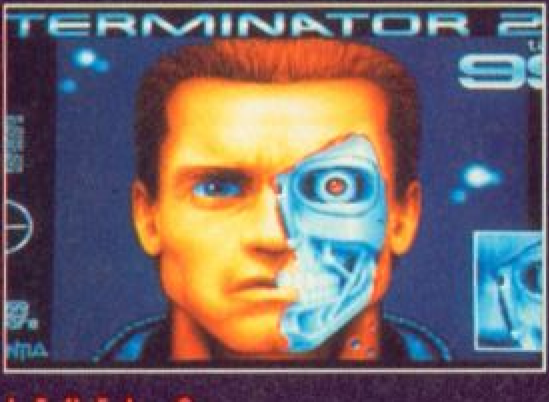
## LEVEL 4

At the outset of the movie, Sarah Connor's been put in a mental asylum, because no-one believes her story about future wars and robot killers. But when she has a dream in which Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn in a cameo role) urges her to protect her son, she decides to escape - just as BOTH Terminators turn up looking for her.

"This is long scrolly level where the player, as Sarah, has to fight her way through all these nurses who are trying to stop her from escaping. After you've fought your way to the end of the corridor, you come to two doors. Arnold steps out of one and the T1000 steps out of the other. At this point Sarah and John Connor run into the elevator and the player control switches to Arnold, who has another fight with T2. Although in the movie that's not how it happens. Arnold gets into the lift with Sarah and John and T2 jumps onto the top of the lift, trying to kill them with his arm, which he's turned into a six-foot spike."

## LEVEL 5

The second puzzle section, and one of the more ambiguous scenes in terms of how it relates to the movie. In the film, Arnold takes Sarah and John Connor out to the desert to hide out with a Mexican family - during which time, computer whiz John teaches Arnold the value of human life. In the game this subtle programming is represented by a sliding block puzzle where the idea is to correctly position Arnie's camera-eye. This approach also allowed Kevin to make use of the robot/human imagery he so likes (see main feature).



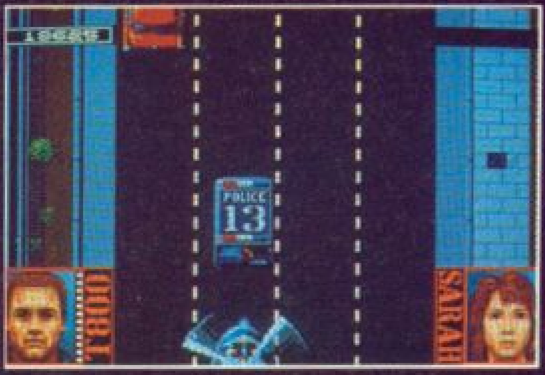
## LEVEL 6

Another scrolling level, this time with the player in control of Arnold as he fights his way through a police SWAT team which has orders to destroy him. They're all firing at him with machine-guns, but in true Terminator fashion, he couldn't care less.

To explain how this comes about would give too much of the story away, but suffice to say he steals a SWAT team van and uses it to ferry Sarah and John Connor to safety - which leads to the next action sequence. In the game, avoiding bullets is the order of the day as Arnold can only take so much damage.

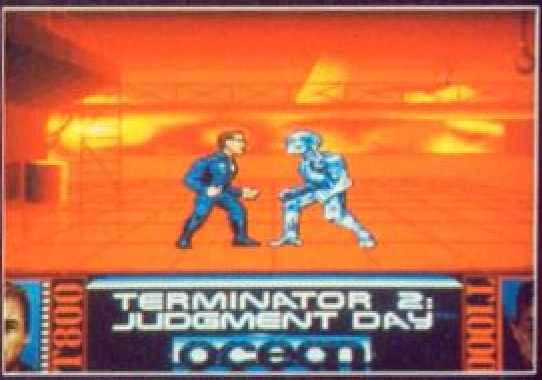
## LEVEL 7

Having escaped from the police in the SWAT team van, Arnold and the two Connors now have something else to worry about in the form of the T1000, which is now chasing them in a stolen helicopter. "In this game you have control over both characters - Arnold driving the van, and Sarah Connor, who is shooting out of the back at the helicopter," says Kevin. "The shooting works by means of a crosshair which homes in automatically on the chopper - but only when you're not steering the truck. As soon as you swerve to avoid a road obstacle or the bullets that the T2 is firing back, Sarah loses aim and has to start again." Again, it's a distance related chase, and if you can survive long enough, the helicopter crashes into some overhead power cables."



## LEVEL 8

The final level recreates the movie's apocalyptic climax where Arnold and the T1000, who have both been severely damaged, fight it out for the last time in a steel mill. It's a straight combat game, like the first level, although this time, for the first time, the T1000 is actually vulnerable and can be hurt (for reasons which would be too story-revealing to explain). More artistic licence has been applied here, as while in the movie Arnie still has his flesh, in the game he's seen just as the robotic exoskeleton, as in the final scenes of the original movie.



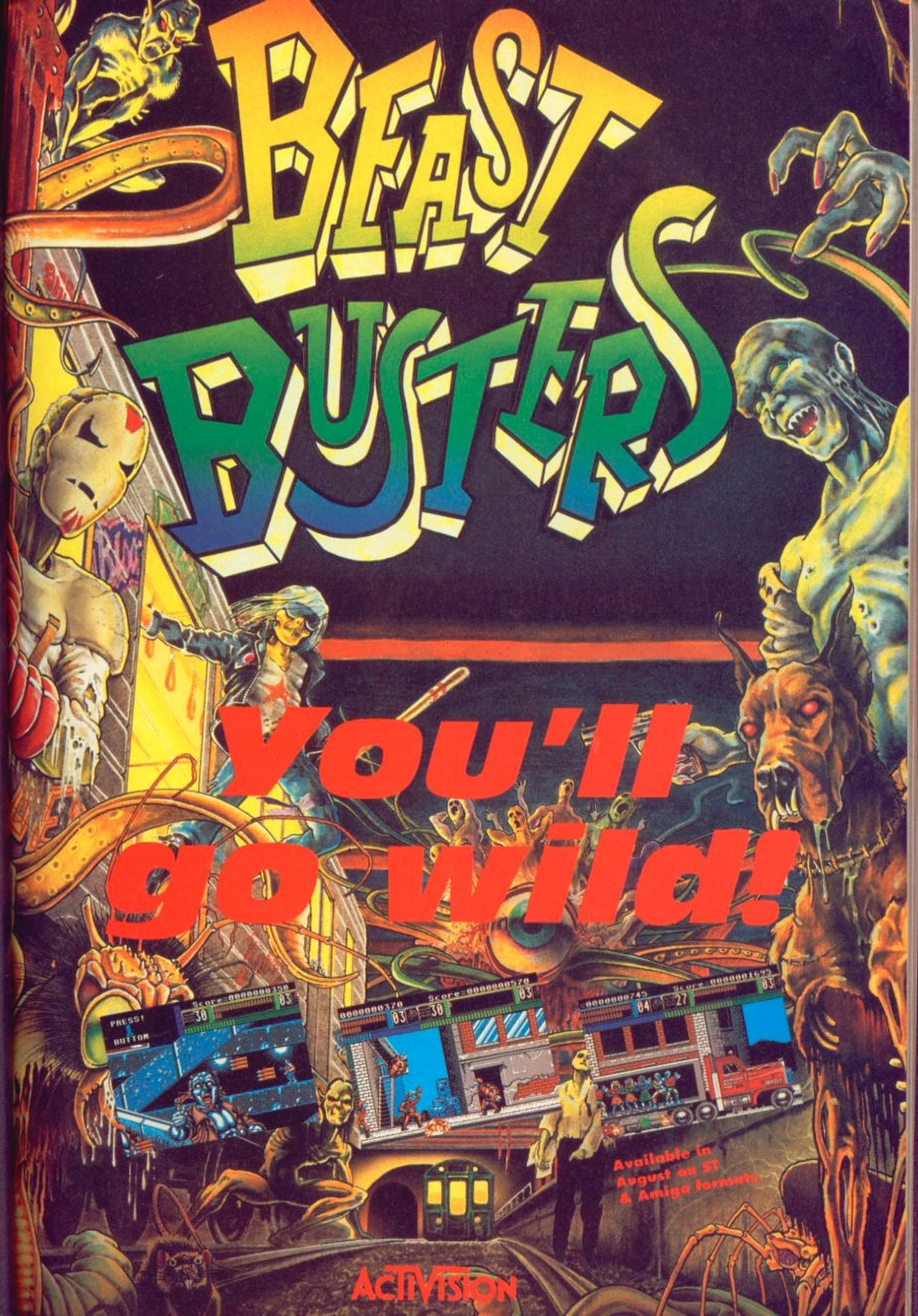
Big Arnie (right) and the T1000 square off for the final battle in the steel mill. Notice how Arnie is presented just as the robotic skeleton, rather than the flesh-covered version seen in the movie.

(Below) Two more scenes digitised by Kevin to provide relief while the levels load. The top picture is of the T1000's target John Connor, while the shot below represents one of the relentless robot's efforts to get his hands on the beleagured boy - by crashing out of the side of a shopping mall on a motorbike and onto the side of a helicopter. Did we mention this guy was *well hard*?

### THE CONSOLE CONNECTION

Console owners needn't miss out on the ultra-violent fun - American giant Acclaim has the console rights, and currently has UK development team Software Creations beavering away on an NES version for release later in the year.

A special ACE thankyou goes out to Rod Cousens at Acclaim UK, Richard Kane at Software Creations and Kevin Bulmer, a trio without whose help this feature would never have been possible.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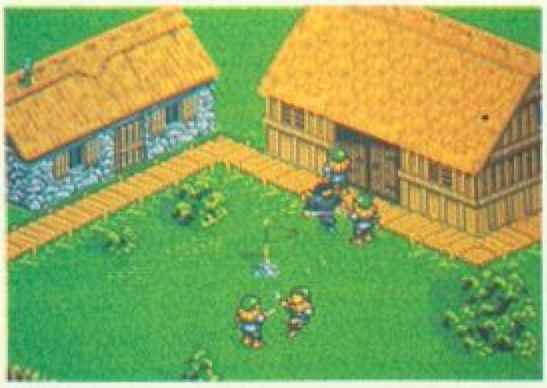
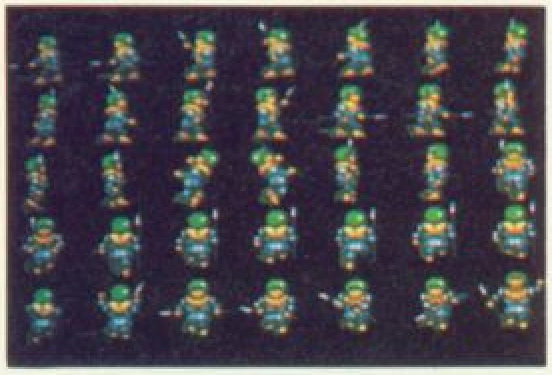
# FLAG





(Above) Some on Ian's sprites in their working forms.

(Above top) The game as it will look in its present form. There's plenty going on here - two battles, including one with a ninja, and an attempt by a battering-ram team to destroy an enemy building. The relatively small number of icons on the shelves around the playing area is testament to the game's simplicity. Only those on the left-hand side of the screen are those used regularly - move around the map, attack and so on. The idea is that control is uncluttered and instinctive.

Well, not quite. But it's certainly true to say that the 'different' nature of the latest creation from *Lost Patrol*-lers Ian Harling and Simon Cooke has been sending heads scratching in confusion even at Gremlin over the last few months. "We keep having meetings to go over the design, but the idea is so simple it's really hard to explain," says Harling.

Harling goes to great pains to explain that his game's strength lies in its simplicity - and it's perhaps this simplicity which is confusing, since games with this isometric-3D look (*Populous, PowerMonger et al*) tend to be *extremely* complex. All at Gremlin, however, are confident that *Flag* will be a storming success.

Come on then, Ian, what's it all about then? "Right. The idea is that you have a landscape with two opposing armies. Each army has a flag, and the object of the game is to get one of your men to touch your opponent's flag - and you've got to stop him from touching yours."

Sounds pretty simple to us. "Ah, well, it does get a little bit more complicated than that," Ian interjects. "The way it works is that at the outset of the game you have a certain amount of gold with which to buy an army, so you have to decide what kind of army you want. The game itself takes place in this very big isometric scrolling landscape, with a stockade for each army. There are all different types of soldiers you can buy - there are regular troops, special battering-ram men you use to knock down the enemy's buildings, labourers and ninja saboteurs."

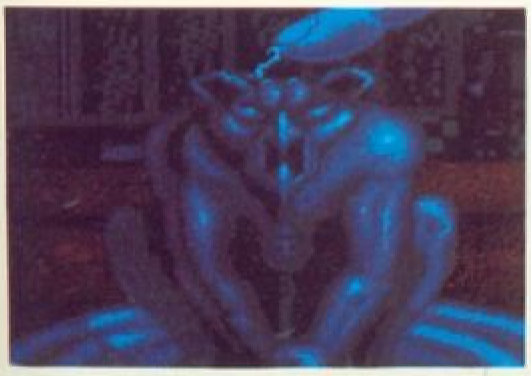
Capturing the enemy's flag - and indeed protecting your own - isn't as easy as you might think. Strategic balance is the order of the day as you must decide how many men to assign to duties pertaining to attacking the enemy flag, and how many to have in defence of your own. You can build a physical wall of men around your flag which would make it very difficult to get at but wouldn't leave you much to go after the enemy with, or throw everything you have at the enemy, but risk having your own, poorly-defended flag toppled before you get to his.

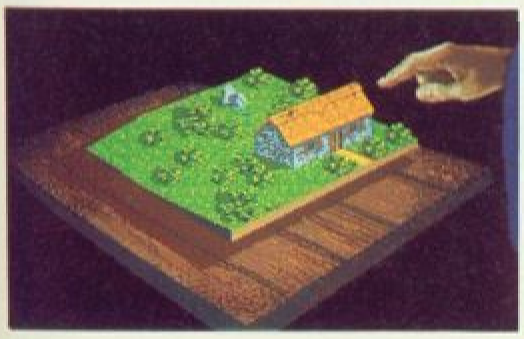
More complex strategies involve the use of labourers to use the shape of the landscape to

## ONCE UPON A TIME...

**"I'm sick of all these big strategy games taking themselves far too seriously with epic scenarios," says Ian Harling, "so for *Flag* the whole background story is very tongue-in-cheek. The idea is that there are these two evil wizards who have been around for thousands of years, and they're always arguing about who has the better army. So every five years or so they chuck everything they've got at each other in this elaborate 'capture the flag' wargame. You take on the role of one of the wizards at the start of one such game. All you have to do is win."**

**There are forty landscapes in all, with each of the wizard's ten generals attacking four times each at five-year intervals (game time). At the outset the setting is late Thirteenth Century, but as things progress, so do the fashions with Tudor and Elizabethan styles popping up along the way.**



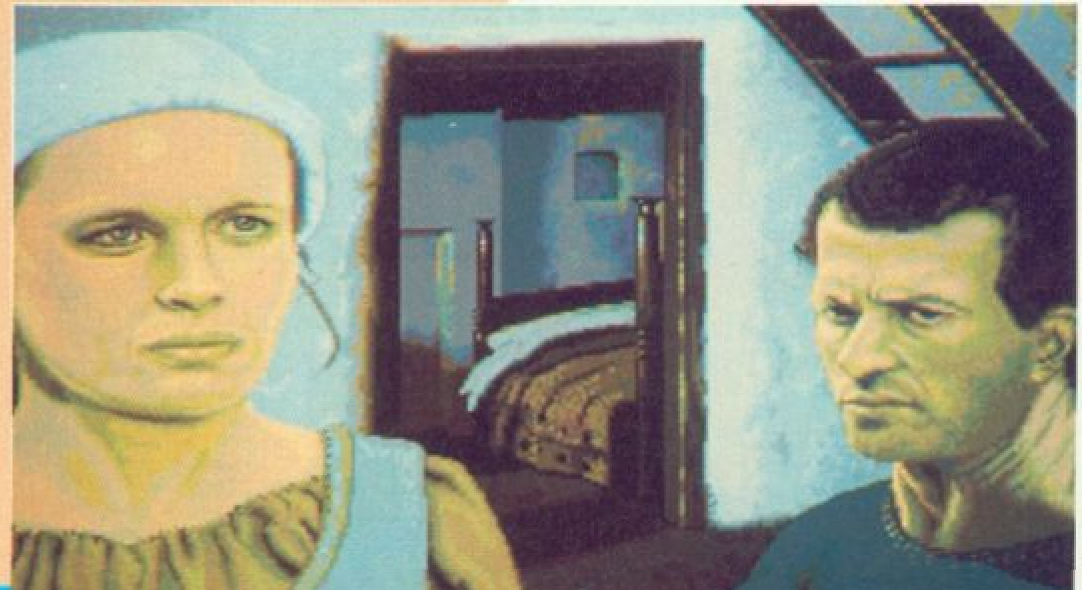


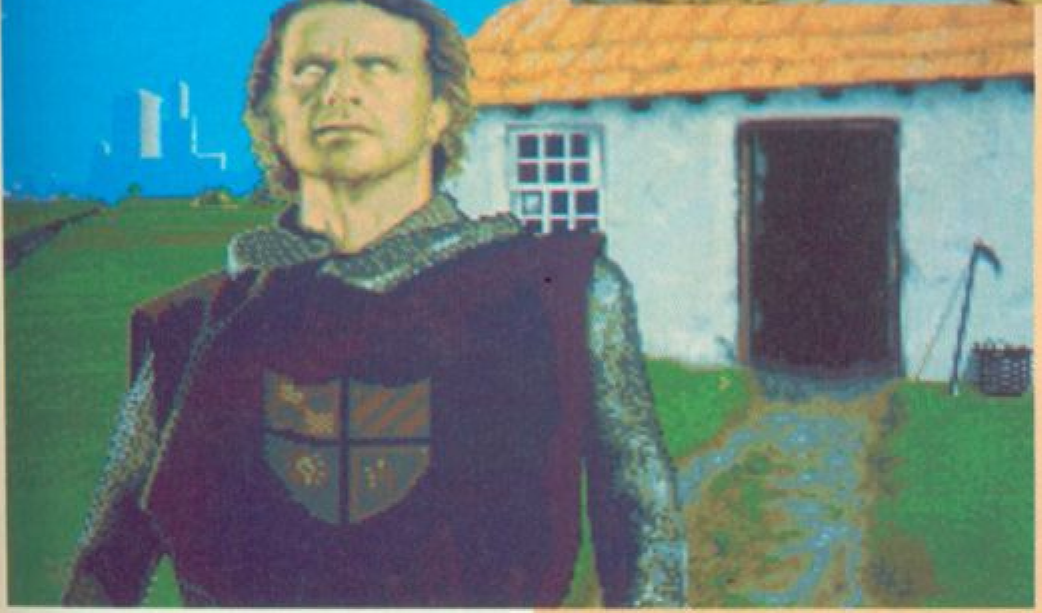
(Above) "With the landscape created, the wizard then starts to put buildings down on it. We see this one created, piece by piece as the roof and the walls fall from the sky."

(Above top) "It all starts out with this sequence with the bad wizard, sitting in his castle playing about with spells. After the wizard gets bored transforming things in his chamber, there's this sequence where he changes an ornament onto his desk into part of the game landscape, then throws it against the wall. It crashes and turns into the actual landscape that you play the game on."

## CURTAIN UP...

***Flag* promises to have one of the most elaborate opening sequences in computer game history. "At the time we just thought 'Why not?'," says Ian. "The only problem is that the opening sequence has got so big that there may be a problem with keeping it all in. At the moment it's a two-disk game, and there's a chance that it may have to go to three to preserve all the graphics - the only problem is I don't think Gremlin wants to do three disks."**

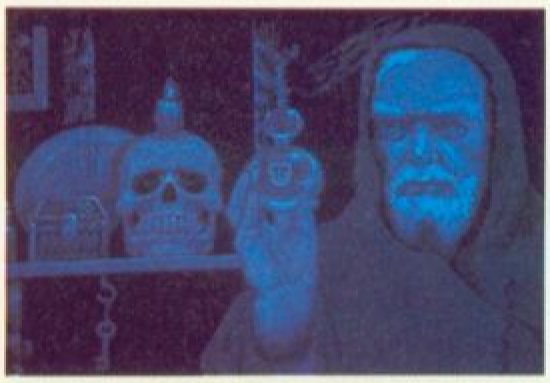


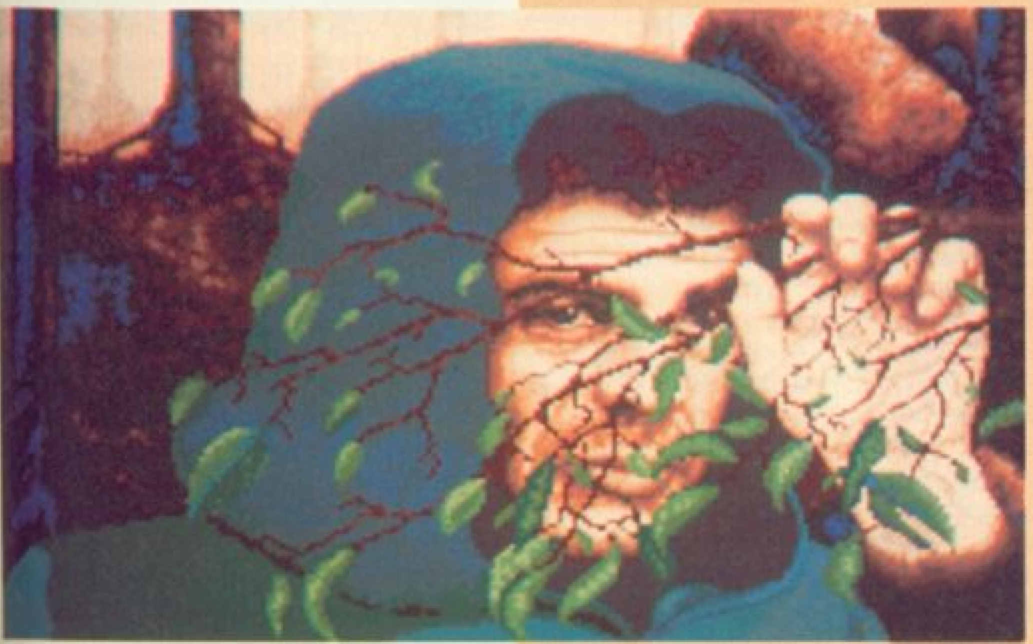


(Above and left) "The next scene is inside the house, with this fellow and his wife. The wizard opens the door, the man walks outside and gets transformed into a zombie."

(Below left) "We then get this scene where we see a spy watching the armies on the move. This sets up the prelude to war just before the main game begins."

(Below) When you buy magic spells to use against your opponent you're greeted with this short animation. "The magician lifts up the phial and turns it, and we see this little face inside that screams 'help me!'" explains Ian.





the enemy's disadvantage. In certain 'worlds', the only way of crossing a river that divides the two armies is by a single bridge. If you were to have your men build a brick wall across the face of the bridge, any attacking army would be forced to wade through the water in order to get across, sapping their morale in the process. The ninja saboteurs are useful for those who require more direct results - like the Knights in *Populous*, these super-hard infiltration units storm around the enemy camp kicking in anyone who gets in their way and destroying buildings. An original

☞

# FLAG

touch is that, like true ninjas, they've mastered the art of shadow-invisibility, and so can only be seen by the enemy when in close proximity - by which time it's normally too late.

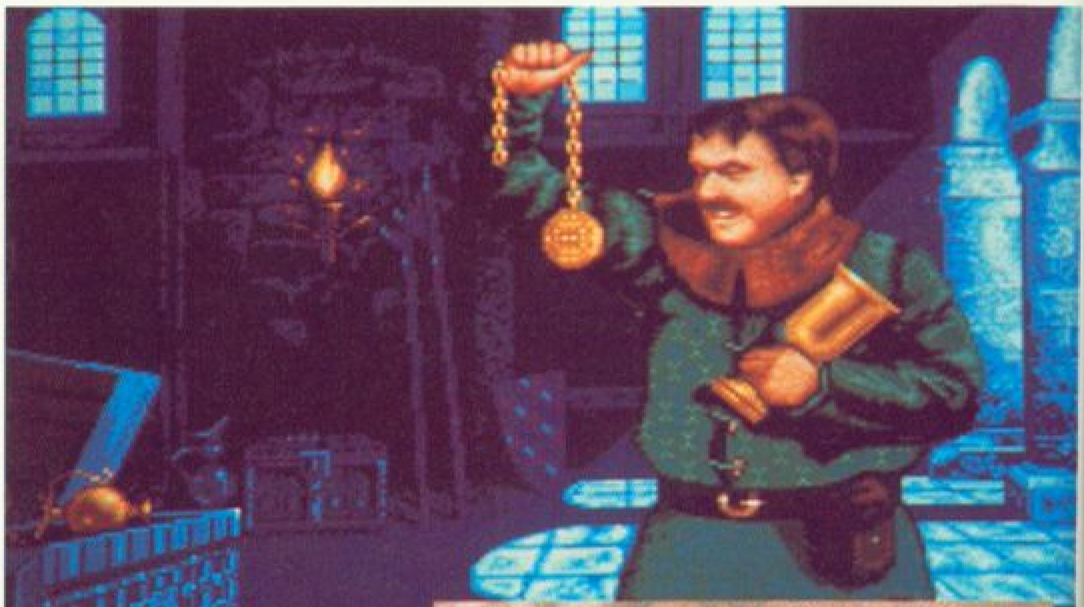
Attacking buildings can often be considerably more effective than popping off individual soldiers, as Ian explains. "We don't just put buildings on the landscape for decoration. Each one has a specific purpose relating to its army. For example there are taverns which, if destroyed, will lower that army's morale. Each army also has a treasury building where it keeps all its reserve money for buying more troops. If you loot that, you can stop the enemy reinforcing and rebuilding its army."

### IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

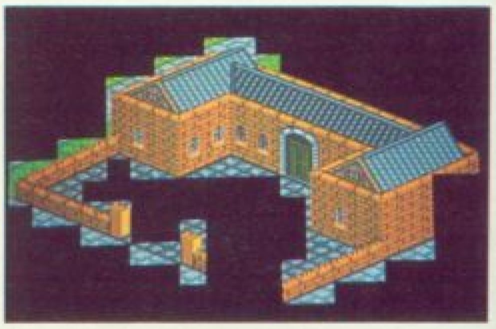
In true swords'n'sorcery style, magic plays an important part in the proceedings. "If you've got the cash, you can buy various magic spells to use against the enemy," Ian explains. "There's a plague spell that's particularly nasty. What you do is sacrifice one of your own men by infecting him with the plague, then send him marching into the enemy camp - anyone who comes near him will become infected and eventually die."

### HERE BE DRAGONS

In an attempt to add some more spice to the gameplay, Ian has drawn on more classical swords'n'sorcery themes. "What we've done is put in these dragons that pop up randomly as the game progresses, and then proceed to rampage around the landscape destroying people and buildings indiscriminately. Before they appear you'll get an animation screen to let you know that one's on its way. " It has to be said that a similar feature did appear in *Populous* (arguably the game by which all others in the genre are judged), although much less was made of it in Bullfrog's classic - they were treated much more as just something to look out for than a serious gameplay element.

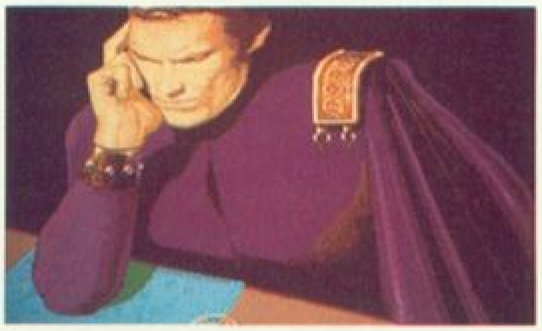


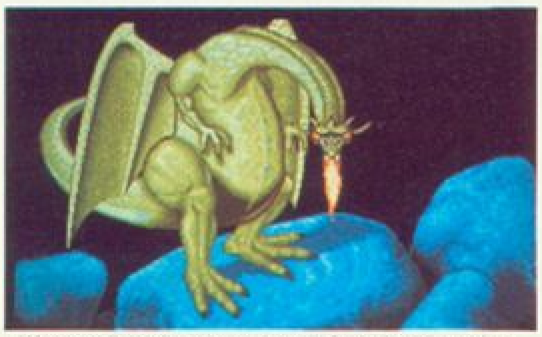
**(Above and right) When dealing with more detailed graphics such as the human form and faces, Ian chooses to draw from life to get the realistic effect he's looking for. "When I want to draw, say, a human hand, I'll take a picture of my own hand to make sure everything's correct anatomically. This figure here, which appears in the scene when a treasury is looted, is actually taken from a picture in *YOU Sunday* magazine. I applied the same technique when drawing the wizard in the introductory sequence."**



**(Right) Ian's currently busy designing buildings for *Flag*'s later levels. Some of them are too large to be drawn as a single object, so a construction kit system has been utilised instead. The basic landscape is built in the same way, with wells, roads, fences and hedges all available to drop anywhere on the landscape as the designer sees fit.**

**(Below right) Here we see testimony to Ian Harling's method of drawing from real-life imagery when putting together graphics of human forms and faces. This handsome chap, who is seen in the game as one of the ten enemy generals, bears more than a passing resemblance to Harling himself!**





**(Above top) Another enemy general, from the mouse of Ian Harling. As the action hots up, the computer generals change in personality, from clot barbarians to the more thoughtful, resourceful type seen here.**

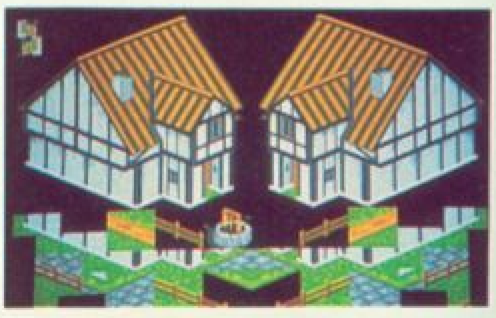
**(Above ) Another of Ian's *DPaint III* animations, this time of the dragon, breathing fire and generally being dragon-y before it appears on the field of play and start stomping on anything it comes across. "They're basically very tough creatures," Ian explains, "but they're not invulnerable. It is possible to kill them..."**

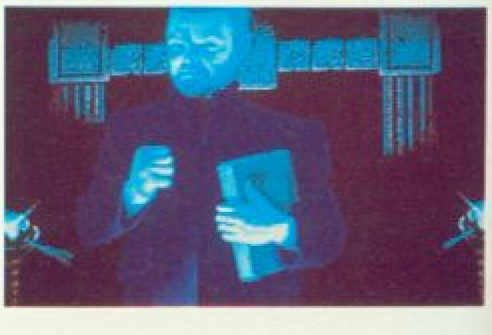
### SIMPLICITY ITSELF

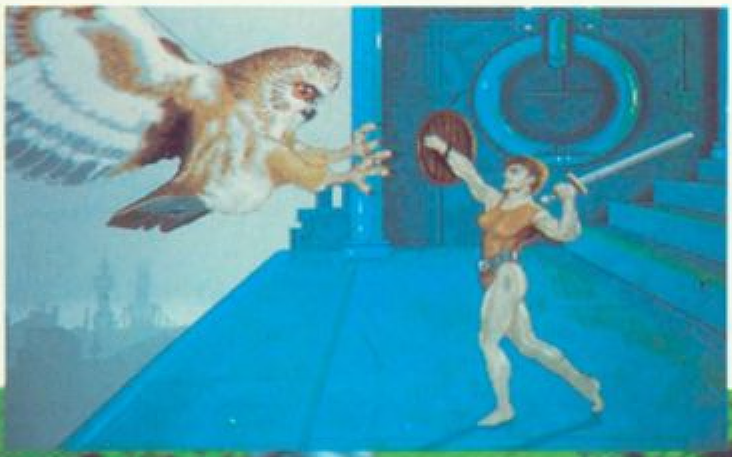
When asked how the original idea for *Flag* came about, Ian is quick to answer. "I think we just got fed up of seeing all these strategy games that you need the brain the size of a planet and an instruction manual to match in order to play. *PowerMonger*, for example, is an excellent game, but by the time you've got it all set up, and spent ages building up your food stocks and everything, you can't be bothered."

"Most people don't want to have to worry about all this multi-layered ultra-deep counter-strategy claptrap. They just want to have a blast, and *Flag* lets them do that, while still retaining strong strategic elements. The idea was always to create a game with lasting interest, but one that you could just pick up and play straight away, even if you didn't have a manual. I don't think that the manual for this is going to need to be more than two pages."

Creating a 'simple' game that's easy to understand and play isn't as easy as it sounds - Ian and Simon went through more than a few packets of Anadin Extra chewing over some of the more complex problems thrown up by the

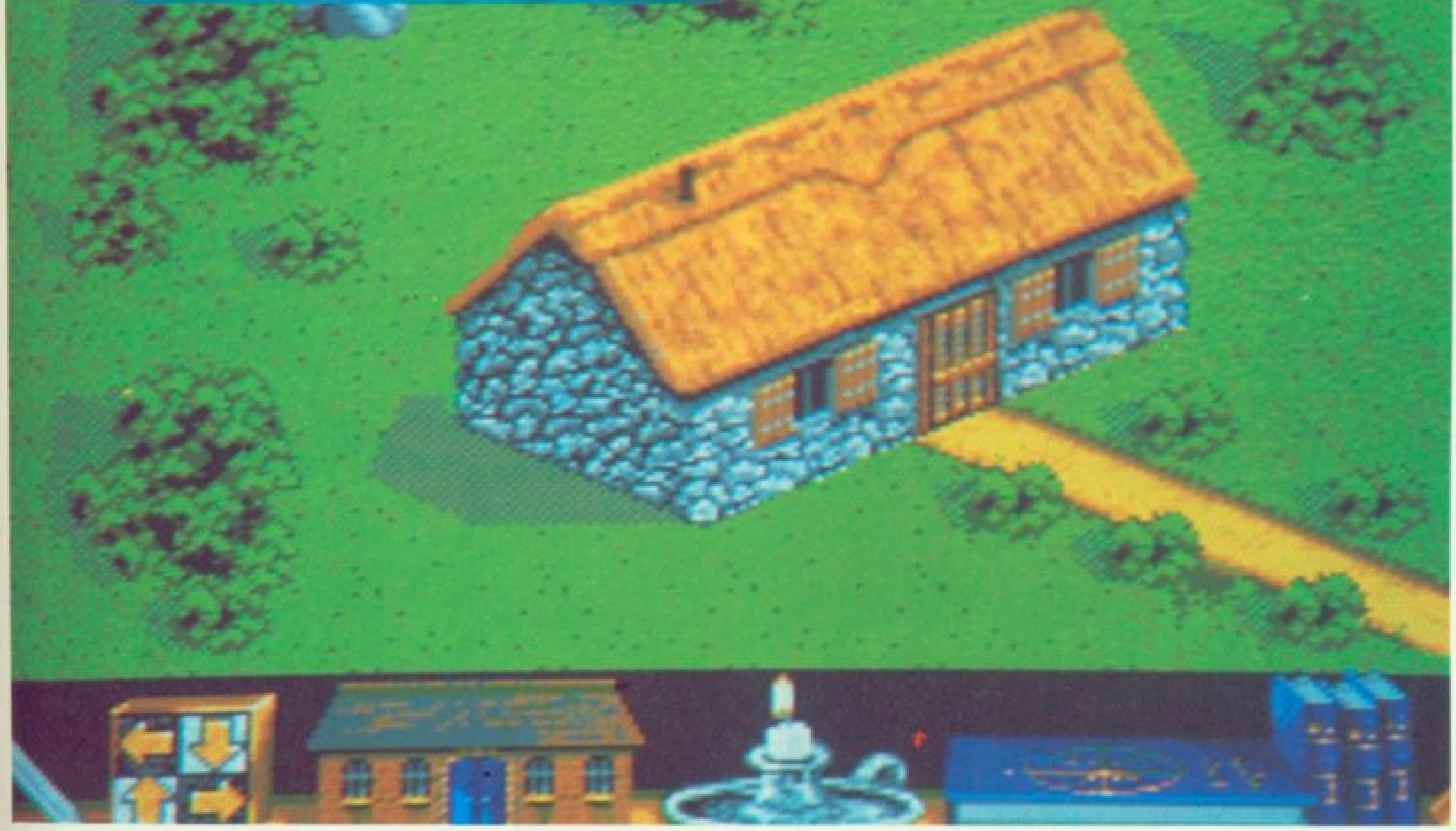






**(Left) And you thought Hollywood had the monopoly on back-toback sequels? Ian and Simon are already formulating a game design for *Flag 2*, a role-playing extravaganza where four players venture into the evil wizard's castle to destroy him. To illustrate the idea, Ian knocked up this Interlaced *DPaint* screen.**

**(Below) This is how he game will look in its finished form, complete with icons. This display is testimony to how simple the game is, with only three or four icons that are used repeatedly during play.**



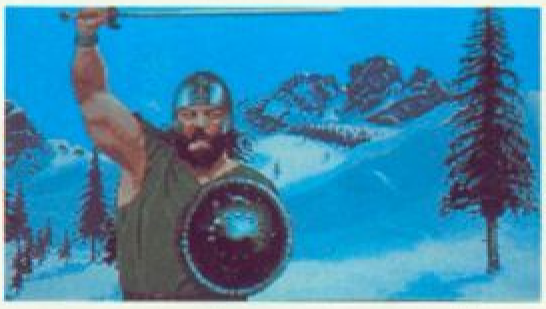
gameplay. "The soldiers in your army can all be assigned individual tasks, and you can also activate actions by selecting enemy men," says Ian. "Say, for example, you click on a single enemy soldier. The computer will search for the nearest friendly soldier who doesn't already have a task to do, and order him to attack that man. It's all handled automatically, which means that the player doesn't have to go through all these torturous command routines to execute a relatively simple action."

Every effort has been made to ensure that the player knows exactly what's going on all the time - with less to worry about on that score, more grey matter is freed-up to concentrate on strategy. "After a man has completed an assigned task, he will stop and do nothing. That sounds stupid but it's actually very practical. If you need someone to select for a task, it makes it much easier to select a man because you can see immediately that he's not doing anything. If they were just wandering about it would be very difficult to differentiate them from the soldiers who are busy performing genuine tasks. It does not, however, mean the men have to be told to do something before they do it. If an enemy comes near them looking for a fight, your man will make its own reasoned decision whether to fight or flee."

Care has also been taken to ensure that the *Flag* player doesn't get bored after he wins the game. "The facility will be there to link two computers, so you can play a human opponent, and you will have the option of playing an offensive or defensive game," Ian explains. "What you'll also be able to do is have the option to set your *Flag* anywhere you like on the landscape, and set pre-game parameters like in *Populous*, so you can find out, for example, how you get on without being able to use sabotuers, or battering-ram carriers. Oh, and we've chucked in a few other things for a bit of a laugh - there'll be geese and sheep to chase around."

Tech-wise, here's the story - the Amiga version will be full 32 colours, with the PC version sporting a dreamy 256 in VGA mode. The whole shabang has been created using true isometric 3D modelling (where would we be without that true isometric 3D modelling, eh?) and there'll be a minimum of 20 sprites on screen at a time running at 17 frames per second - no mean feat. The only thing that's yet to be sorted out is the sound - Ian has received a couple of impressive demo disks from musicians keen to contribute, abut a final decision has yet to be made.

Ian and Simon have been working on *Flag* since the start of the year, and though there's bundles of work still to be done, Ian is already feeling confident. "This is the first game I've worked on where I've really felt - this is going to be the big one." You can find out if Ian's right when Gremlin releases *Flag* in October and ACE gets its grubby mitts on it...



# RETRO

## Can CORE DESIGN beat the Bitmap Brothers at their own game?

When it comes to future sport sims, few would deny that the notorious Bitmap Brothers reign supreme. With the ground-breaking *Speedball* they practically defined the genre. And with the superlative sequel the Bros created what many would argue to be the definitive example of the craft. Or have they?

Core Design don't think so. For the past six months or so Steve Northcott (programmer) and Simon Phipps (graphic artist) have been working on a future sports game that they hope will - quite literally - add a new dimension to the future sport genre.

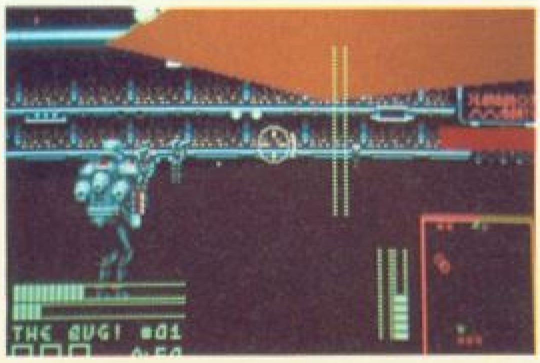
### THE RETRO RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Take one 3D-polygon routine. Stir in a 3D-sprite algorithm. Add a pinch of *Speedball 2* and a soupçon of Harlem Heroes. Simmer for eight or nine months. Meanwhile, prepare some pre-release media attention. Finally, garnish with good reviews. *Voilà* - a hit game. If only it were that simple...

Far in the future, teams from all over the colonised Solar System compete in the Retro League. Each game pits two heavily-armed and heavily-armoured teams of six players against each other in a no-holds-barred scrap. The main aim is to score points by firing a metal ball into the opposition's goal, but there's plenty of incidental high-velocity violence to keep the bloodthirsty crowds amused.

Simon explains *Retro's* genesis: "The original idea was Steve's. He wanted to do a first-person 3D football game, with everything - both pitch and players - generated from polygons. Then I got involved, and together we started to add to the basic premise. From *Corporation* we knew that it was possible to successfully blend polygon backgrounds with sprites, so we thought 'Why not use a similar system on *Retro?*' "

But the use of the Sega-like sprite expansion routines is more than just a gimmick. Says Simon, "Sprites add personality to the players. I wanted to give a feeling of character to the game, that real people are out there on the pitch. The last thing I want is for players to look at the game and think 'Are those humans or robots out there?' "

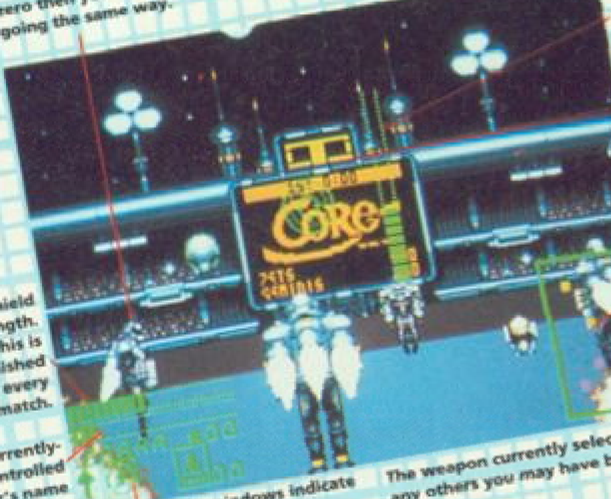


### UNDER THE INFLUENCE

The gameplay bears a strong resemblance to the Harlem Heroes strip which ran in *2000A.D.* comic in the late 70s. Simon, however, denies any connection: "I used to read *2000A.D.*, but I didn't start until long after the Harlem Heroes series had finished. The use of jet suits came about because basically it was the most elegant and plausible way of achieving what we wanted to incorporate into the game.

"Originally we were going to have men running about the pitch but having eight figure rotations with eight animation frames each ate up too much memory. We then thought about having the players seated in hovercars, but that was a bit of a cop out and didn't tie-in with the need to have players perform super jumps."

Did *Speedball 2* influence them at all? "I enjoyed *Speedball 2* a lot - I think it's the best thing the Bitmap Bros have done. But I had to keep away from it so that I didn't get too influenced. It's hard, because within the limits of the game style there are some things, like the gym screen, which are difficult to do in a different way that's still practical and understandable."



Health level. If the shield reduces to zero then you'll soon see this rating going the same way.

Message window.

Holding down fire when in possession builds this power indicator. Release to release. By rapidly tapping the fire button twice your control passes to your team member nearest the ball.

The targeting sight. A small cursor around this sight indicates whether the ball is to the left, right, above or below you.

The positions of all twelve players are indicated on this pitch map. Very useful for setting up passes.

Shield strength. This is replenished before every match.

The currently-controlled player's name and number.

These three windows indicate the suit upgrades fitted.

The weapon currently selected. Tapping space cycles through any others you may have bought and bolted onto the suit.

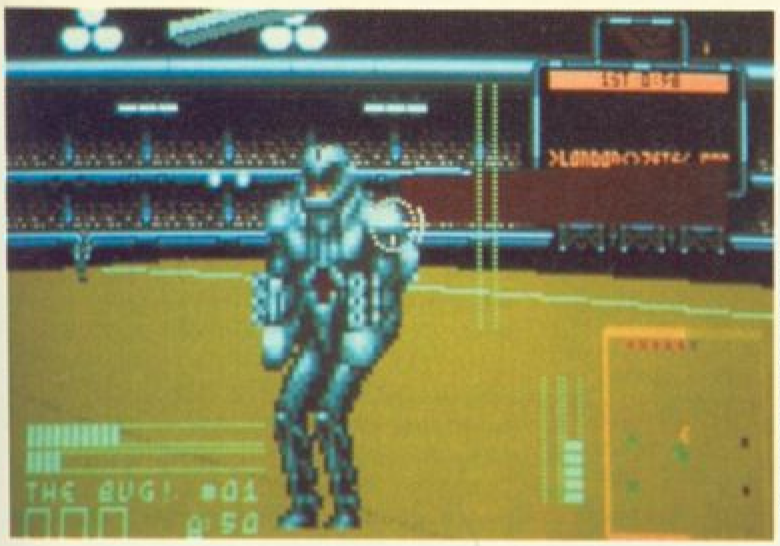
### SIMON SAYS...

**Armed only with an 'O'-level in Art, Simon Phipps' first software project was providing the graphics for Gremlin's *Masters of the Universe* back in 1987. His first full programming job was *Rick Dangerous*, where he also provided the graphics. More recently he's worked on *Switchblade II* and the forthcoming chopper sim *Thunderhawk*. Of *Retro* he says, "It's been quite a liberating experience. Normally I program and do the graphics. On *Retro* I just did the graphics and contributed ideas."**

**Simon always starts by sketching out his ideas on paper, then transferring them to the computer. All the graphics are drawn in *Art Studio*, as opposed to the oft-quoted *DPaint III*. Simon's reasons are totally personal, "I just can't get my head around *DPaint*! *Art Studio* was designed for programmers. It's fast, and it's one of the few art packages that allows you to manipulate small sprite-size areas of memory quickly and easily."**

**Although Simon can leave Steve to handle all the programming headaches, the graphic artist's job isn't without problems, designing a recognisable yet unique-looking jetsuit being one of them. Simon started by modelling the armour on the musculature of the body: "The trouble was the players began to look like the Imperial Stormtroopers from *Star Wars*. I thought, 'Oh no, I don't want that' and had to start again."**

**The fact that the sprites get very small also caused headaches: "I didn't want the headgear to look like a motorcycle helmet, but when a sprite's head is shrunk down to a few pixels across, it's hard to get the helmet to look like anything else. You always want half pixels!"**



Apart from the graphic complications of getting such huge sprites, there's been the problem of getting the players to behave pseudo intelligently. Steve's solution is to restrain players to certain 'zones', depending on whether they're in Attack, Midfield or Defence. Simon recalls, "We had to do that otherwise all twelve players would immediately rush to where the ball was!"

## THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPRITE

The most immediately stunning graphic element of *Retro* is its fast shrinking/enlarging sprites (an effect seen in *Corporation* and Millenium's *Stormball*). Technically, Retro outstrips them both, with twelve sprites of varying size zipping about at around eight frames per second.

The routine can generate any size sprite up to a whopping 128 x 128 pixels (where they take on the familiar Sega coin-op chunkiness). Amazingly, all these sprite sizes are generated from just one. Simon draws the sprite in 64 x 48 pixels and 16 colours. Then, Steve's sprite routine shrinks that down to two more 'reference sprites', one 32 x 24 pixels and one 16 x 12 pixels, which are stored in memory. All the other sizes are generated from these three reference sprites in real time. The more memory in the host machine, the more reference sprites will be pregenerated, making for a much faster game.

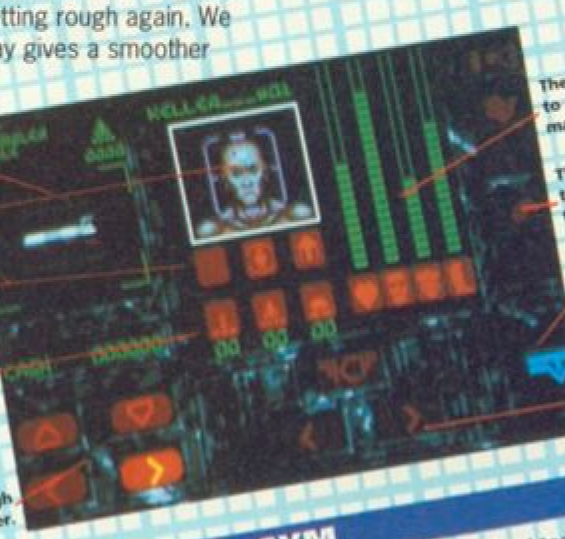
Simon and Steve resisted the temptation to 'clean up' the shrunken reference sprites. "We looked at some other 3D games where the programmers had done this and found that the objects would shrink haphazardly then suddenly look pristine then start getting rough again. We found that jarring. This way gives a smoother transition."

## VERSION DIVERSION

**Steve developed Retro on a high-speed PC using the SNASM development system. The compiled code is then squirted down to the Amiga or ST for testing. Although the two versions will be largely identical, the Amiga version will use the full 32-colour palette (16 for sprites and 16 for backgrounds) and be slightly smoother and faster due to the brute power of the legendary Blitter.**

## WOLF CHILD

**Steve still has a couple of months hard slog ahead of him if he's to make *Retro's* September release date. Simon's work, on the other hand, is largely over. He's now free to return to a project briefly shelved for the duration of *Retro*. It's called *Wolf Child* and, like *Retro*, will only draw on Simon's design and graphic skills. John Kirkland, who has just finished the well-received *Warzone*, is handling the programming chores. Not much is known about the game yet except that it's a arcade-adventure/ beat-'em-up/platform hybrid starring a lycanthropic boy as the hero. Simon's aim is to make it look as much like a Megadrive game as possible. Expect to see *Wolf Child* early next year.**



The ray-traced representation of the weapon or upgrade currently selected.

The currently selected player's fizzog.

The three weapon pods.

The three suit upgrade pods.

Use these icons to cycle through the weapons/upgrades on offer.

The player's ratings (from left to right): health; intelligence; mass; dexterity.

The action priority list. The higher the icon is in the list, the harder the player will try to carry out the associated action.

The team logo.

The current player's position: Captain; Attack; *Midfield*; Defence. Cycle through the team members with the arrow icons.

## HE'S DEAD, GYM

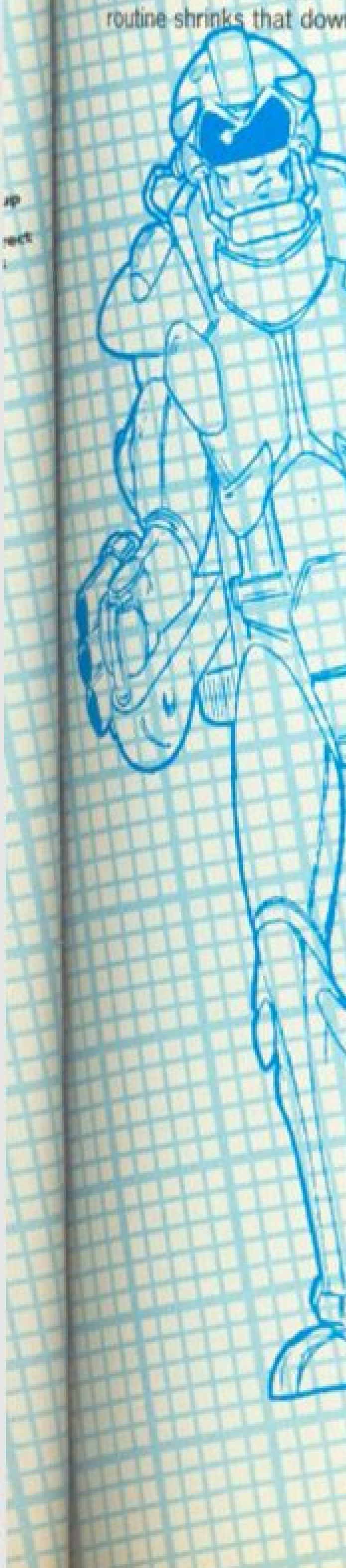
The gymnasium screen is where all the fine honing of your highly-skilled team takes place. Each player's raw playing skills are summed up by four attributes: health, intelligence, mass (a.k.a. attacking power), and dexterity. A player with high mass and low dexterity will be great in defence but slow and clumsy, while a player with low mass and high dexterity will be great for nipping in and out of the opposition players but as fragile as bone china.

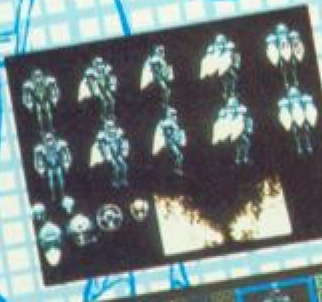
When not under your direct control, a player's actions are governed by a list of icons, indicating actions such as 'try to score', 'pass when possible', 'play aggressively', 'play defensively' and so on. The higher the icon appears in the list, the more the player tries to achieve the corresponding action. Thus make 'go for the goal' and 'play aggressively' the top two and the player will make a bee-line for the far end of the pitch, hammering all and sundry out of his way.

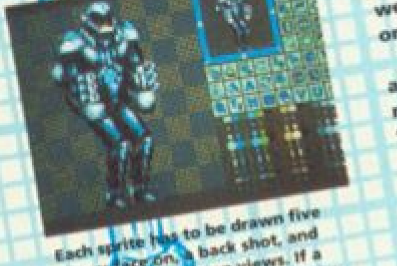
As in all good future sports' sims, there's an option to beef up your team by equipping them with all manner of bullets, missiles and mines, as well as suit upgrades such as shield enhancers, jump boosters and ECM units. Each suit has three weapon 'pods' and three upgrade 'pods', and the more pods filled with one type of weapon or upgrade the more powerful they become. Thus you could have a grade-one missile launcher, a grade-two mine layer and a grade-three jump booster.

For that extra touch of realism, each of the bolt-ons is displayed as a ray-traced animation. Why the over-the-top presentation? Simon explains, "We were going to make do with bit-mapped graphics, but as we had the spare memory we thought 'Why not make them ray-traced?' "

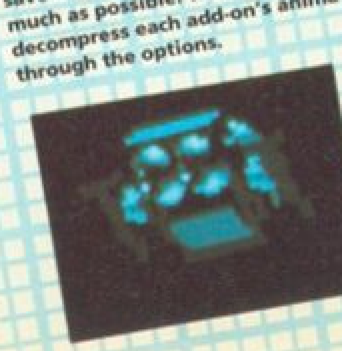
Simon designed and rendered each of the add-ons using the *Cad3D 2* and *Cyberscult* utilities. Each add-on was then saved as sixteen animation frames which, on play back, give the impression of the object rapidly spinning in space. To save on memory the image was rendered in eight grey shades then compressed as much as possible. The intention is to store the animations to disc then load and decompress each add-on's animations as and when needed while the player cycles through the options.







Each sprite has to be drawn five times: face on, a back shot, and three angled side-on views. If a sprite has to be drawn facing the other direction then the sprite is flipped before display, resulting in a total of eight rotated positions. In addition there are five animation frames for such actions as taking off, leaning forward, braking and so on.



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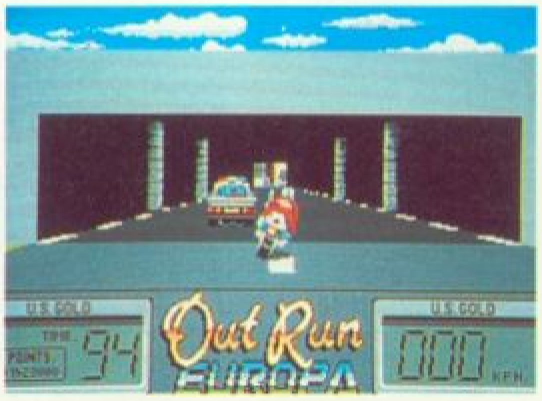


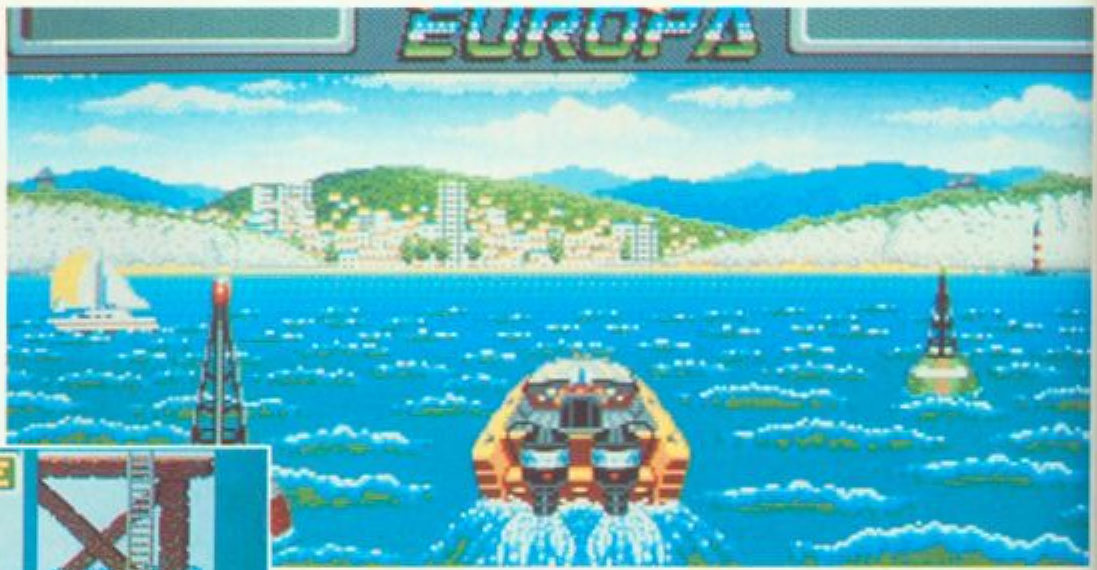
This ain't no Tunnel of Love. Enemy and once-friendly agents attack at all times, and if that wasn't enough the Police want to nail you too.

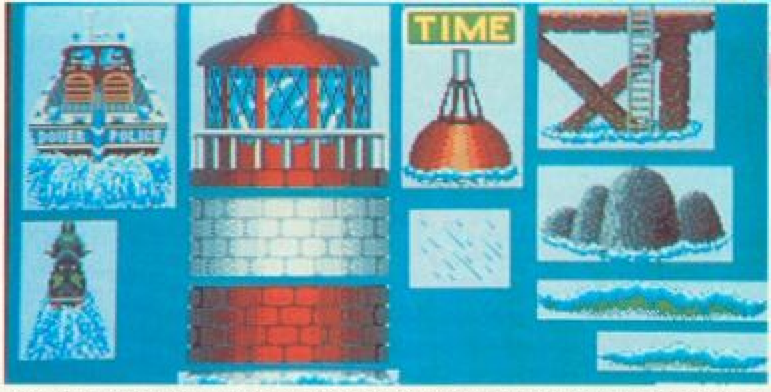
Original sequels to coin-op conversions are not a new phenomenon. Ocean's lucrative *Renegade* resulted in two 'home grown' sequels; *Target: Renegade* and the time-tripping *Renegade III*. More recently, *Mighty BombJack* appeared courtesy of Elite, Storm followed *Silkworm* with *SWIV* and US Gold entered the third dimension with *Gauntlet 3D*.

Now *OutRun* gets the respray treatment. US Gold has already converted the original coin-op and the arcade follow-up *Turbo OutRun*. But things take a major new twist with *OutRun Europa*. The game's plot is a marked departure from the babes 'n' bumpers scenarios of its arcade inspiration.

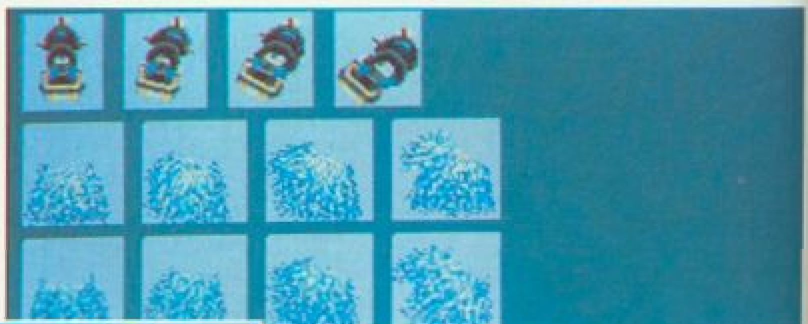
# OUTRUN E

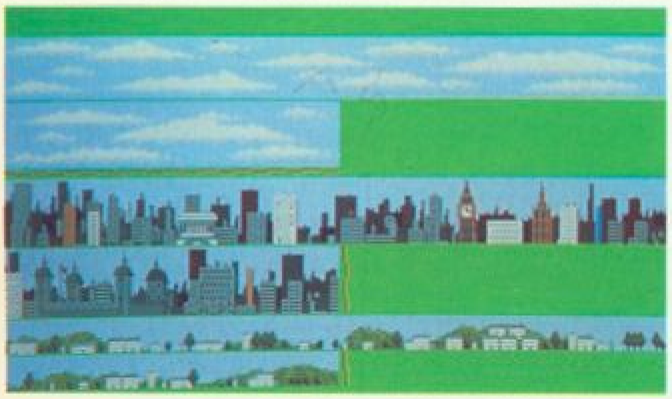
**This new arcade game spin-off dispenses with the original's superificial girls 'n' gears plot in favour of a life or death race across Europe...**



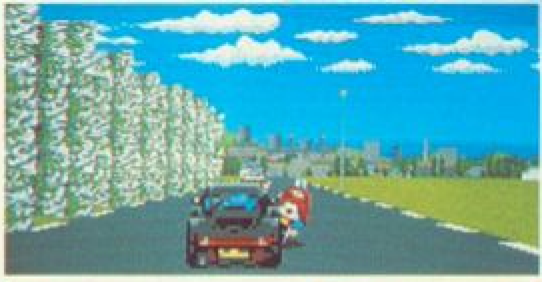


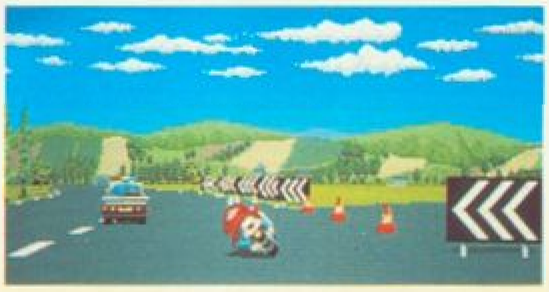
Apart from rocks and enemy boats, there are somewhat more unconventional hazards to avoid on the sea levels, such as toxic waste drums (bottom left).





The horizon is made up of three layered strips scrolling horizontally at different rates depending on the twists and turns of the road. Only the two city strips overlap in true parallax. The third layer (the sky and clouds at the top of the screen) moves above the city.





(Above) The trip across the Med takes place on the back of a jet ski. These sprite screens show some traditional memory saving tricks in action. Each object is only drawn turning to one side; if the opposite direction is needed the program flips the sprite before printing.

(Above Left) The ominous black Porsche of the enemy agents looms into view and tries to shunt your back tire. Note how the sprites take on that famous Sega-like chunkiness at their nearest resolution, an effect that was artificially introduced!

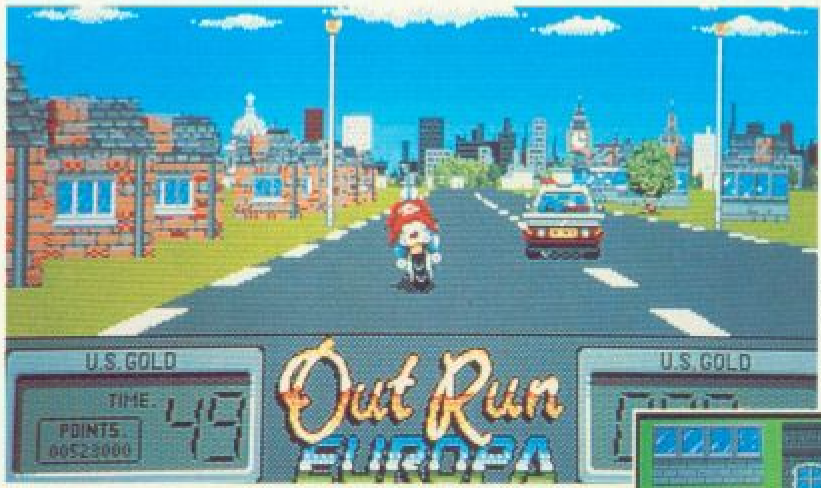
(Top) The powerboat carries Kurtz from Spain to Italy (although the coastline of this pre-production shot looks suspiciously Dover-esque). The sea levels include attacks from the air in the form of a bomb-dropping 'copter. Luckily the powerboat and jetski are mounted with surface-to-air mortars.

(Left) At certain points the road splits into two diverging lanes. Before they're reached, a warning sign flashes up telling the player to get in lane. Only bitter experience will tell the player which is the better option.

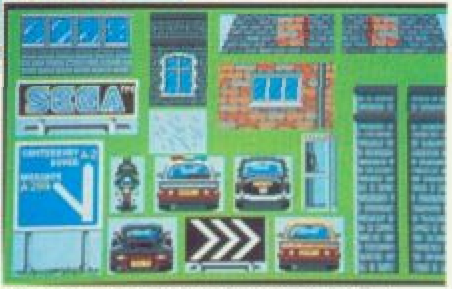
### THE NAME'S KURTZ... SIMEON KURTZ

You play Simeon Kurtz, secret agent, entrusted with the task of carrying Top Secret blueprints from London to Bonn in Germany. Unfortunately, foreign agents have managed to swipe the plans from under your nose. Huh, some agent you are. Control, suffice to say, are somewhat displeased about this, and send assassins to kill you. The only way you can save your own neck is to somehow recover the plans and deliver them as per your original instructions.

It all adds up to a fast 'n' furious race across Europe, the fast-driving elements of *OutRun* skillfully blended with the smash 'n' crash action of *Chase H.Q.* as agents attack from all sides.

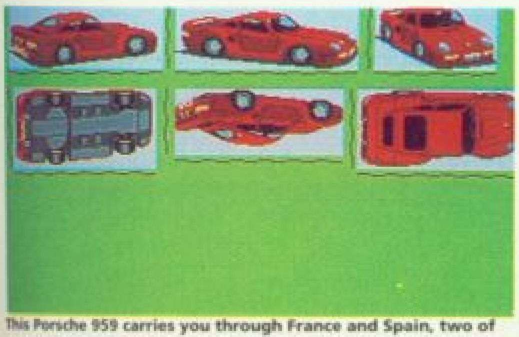


(This early demo shot doesn't really do justice to the graphics, which have now been improved so that the buildings are much biggers. The houses are now more like tower blocks!

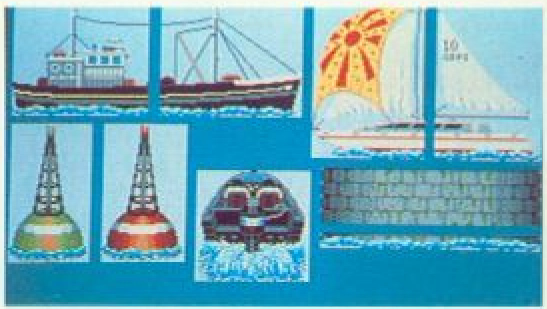


The cars can be split into three groups: police, agents (black Porsches) and passive (the two cars to the right of the chevrons). Police and agent cars will actively try to attack you, while the passive cars just get in the way. As the player moves up the levels, the ratio of passive to active cars increases dramatically in favour of the latter.

# UROPA



This Porsche 959 carries you through France and Spain, two of the game's earlier (and easier) levels. The animation frames show the car flipping when too much damage is sustained.



Some more sea-based sprites. Stuart gave Saul free range with the graphics, and basically said "You draw what you want to draw, and let me worry about putting it in the game".

Rather than being confined to the Ferrarri of the first two games, the player gets to try out a whole range of sea and land vehicles, including motorbikes, powerboats and jetskis.

### PROBING REPORT

There's been talk of *OutRun Europa* for a long time, but it wasn't until April that programming finally started. Probe, having just come up trumps with the superb conversion of the *Super Monaco Grand Prix* coin-op, were the obvious choice to handle the project. Originally ZZKJ, author of *Monaco* and Activision's *Powerdrift* and *Super Hang-On*, was due to program the game, but he felt like a change from racing games (you can hardly blame him!), and is now converting Williams' *Smash TV* coin-op.

Instead, Probe brought in Stuart Gregg to handle the game, whose previous work includes *Archipelagos*, *Resolution 101* and *Horror Zombies from the Crypt* for Millenium. Saul Marchese, an artist who has worked on most of ZZKJ's driving games, is providing the graphics, while Probe regulars Sound Images are producing the music and effects.

*OutRun Europa* being Stuart's first driving game, he spent some time discussing 3D road scrolling with ZZKJ. Stuart then went away and wrote his own machine code routines, which - as it turns out - actually run faster than those in ZZKJ's *Monaco*! On the Amiga, use of the blitter can get the screen to update as quickly as twenty-five times per second, though it typically hovers around seventeen. The ST is slightly slower, but not so much as you'd really notice.

As opposed to *Retro's* 3D generation on the fly (see feature on pages 44 & 45), *OutRun Europa* uses the more traditional method of having all the vehicles and roadside obstacles stored pre-shrunk in memory. Saul draws each object at its largest size, then Stuart uses a program to shrink them down twelve times, which is a sufficient number to give a fluid look to the 3D. Because the shrinking process can make the sprites a little messy, they're passed back to Saul for tidying up.

Interestingly, Saul redraws the maximum enlargement sprites to give them a 'blocky' look, which arcade fans will recognise from the Sega coin-ops. The hope is that it provides an authentic arcade-like feel and look to the game.

And it works! In action the game is wonderfully fast, and provides a supreme feeling of exhilaration as trees and buildings zip past at incredible speed. It's probably the nearest I've seen a race game on computer come to emulating the high-octane thrill of the top coin-ops. Add the *Chase H.Q.*-style violence, and the potential's there for the best road game yet. But can the finished game live up to this early promise? The full in-depth ACE review will reveal all! Look out for it around the time of the game's release this September.

● David Upchurch

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- **FRANCE** - **Now this is more like it. Kurtz gets behind the wheel of a powerful Porsche, which carries him south through the heart of the French countryside to...**
- **SPAIN** - **Kurtz retains the by-now battered and beaten Porsche, which he drives to the coast. There he hops into a powerboat for a trip across...**
- **THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA** - **One merry jaunt across the Sea later and Kurtz reaches...**
- **ITALY** - **Kurtz changes vehicles for the last time; a Ferrari will take him the rest of the way. It carries him north to...**
- **GERMANY** - **Kurtz's mission is almost at an end, but the enemy assault is greater than ever. Will you live long enough to see Bonn?**

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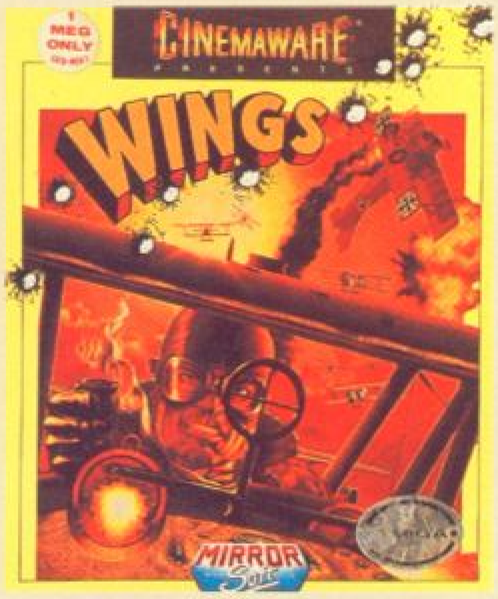
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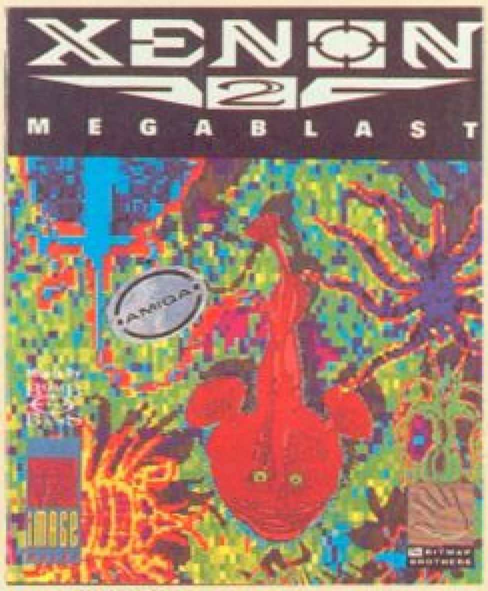
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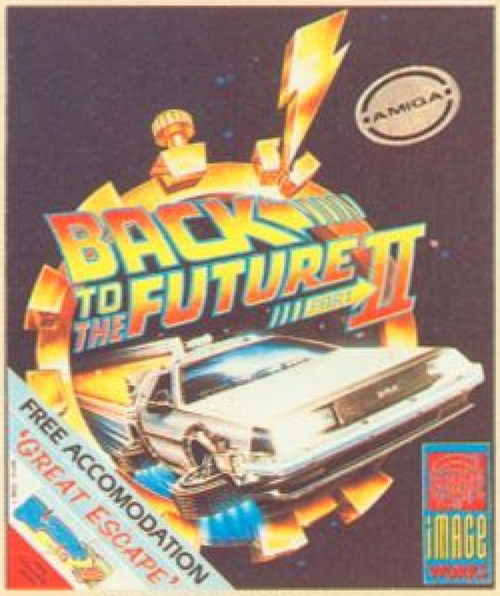
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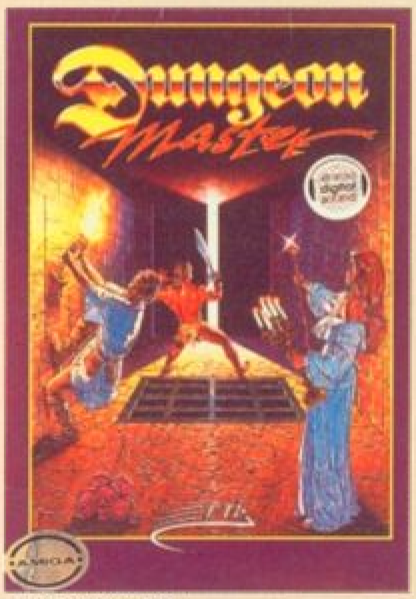

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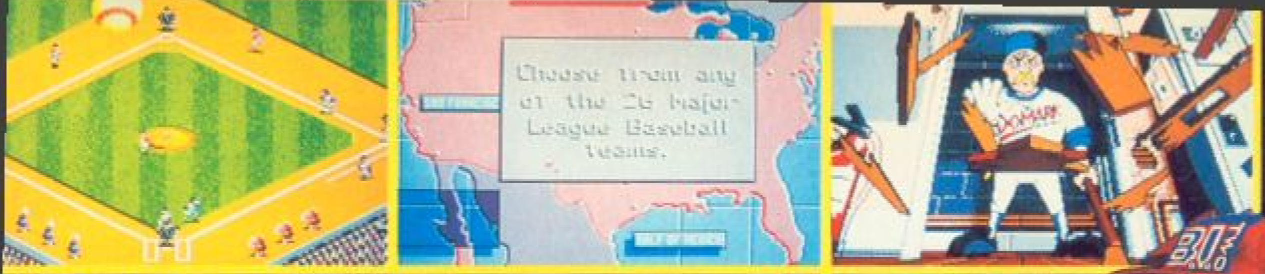

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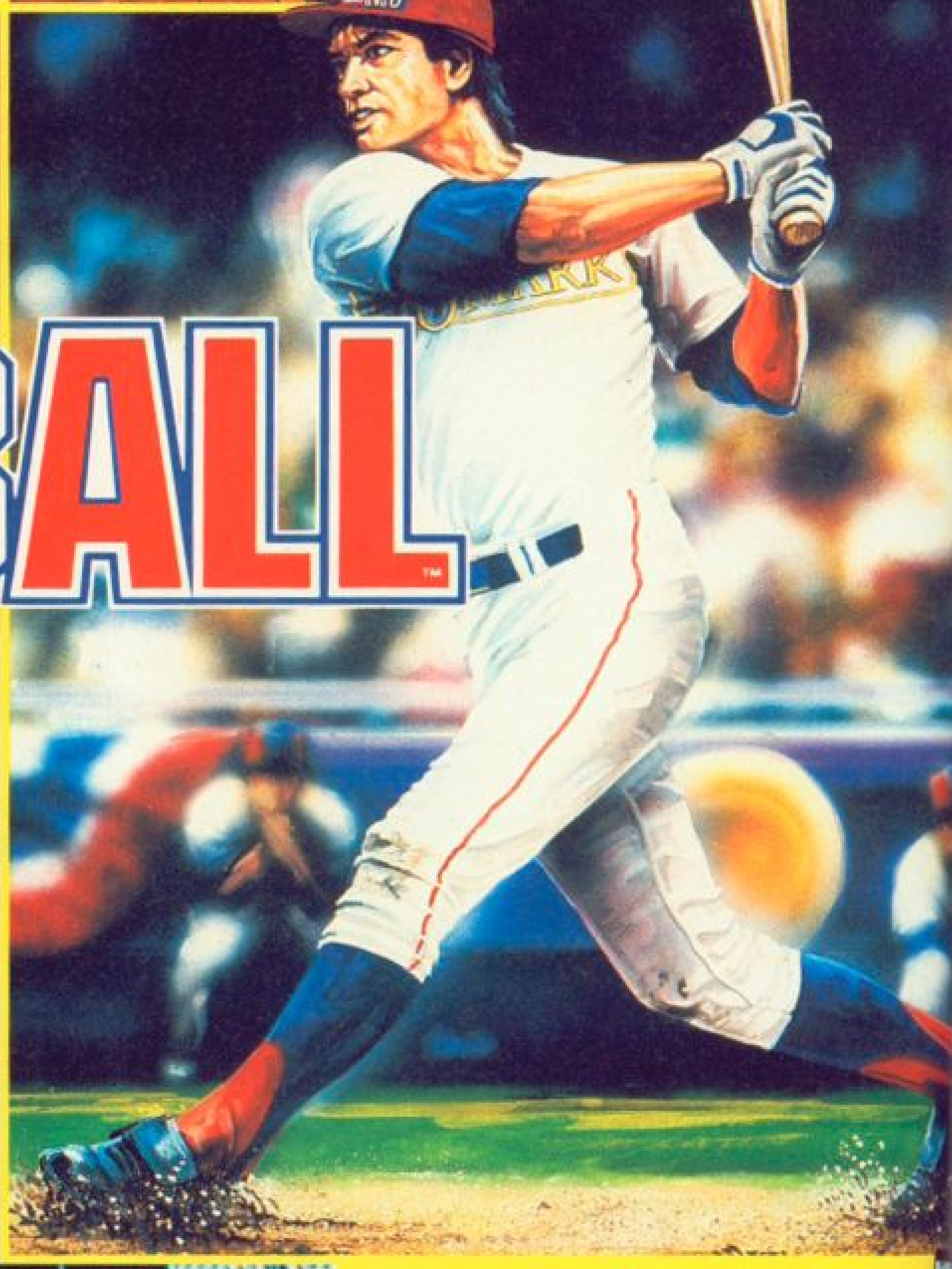

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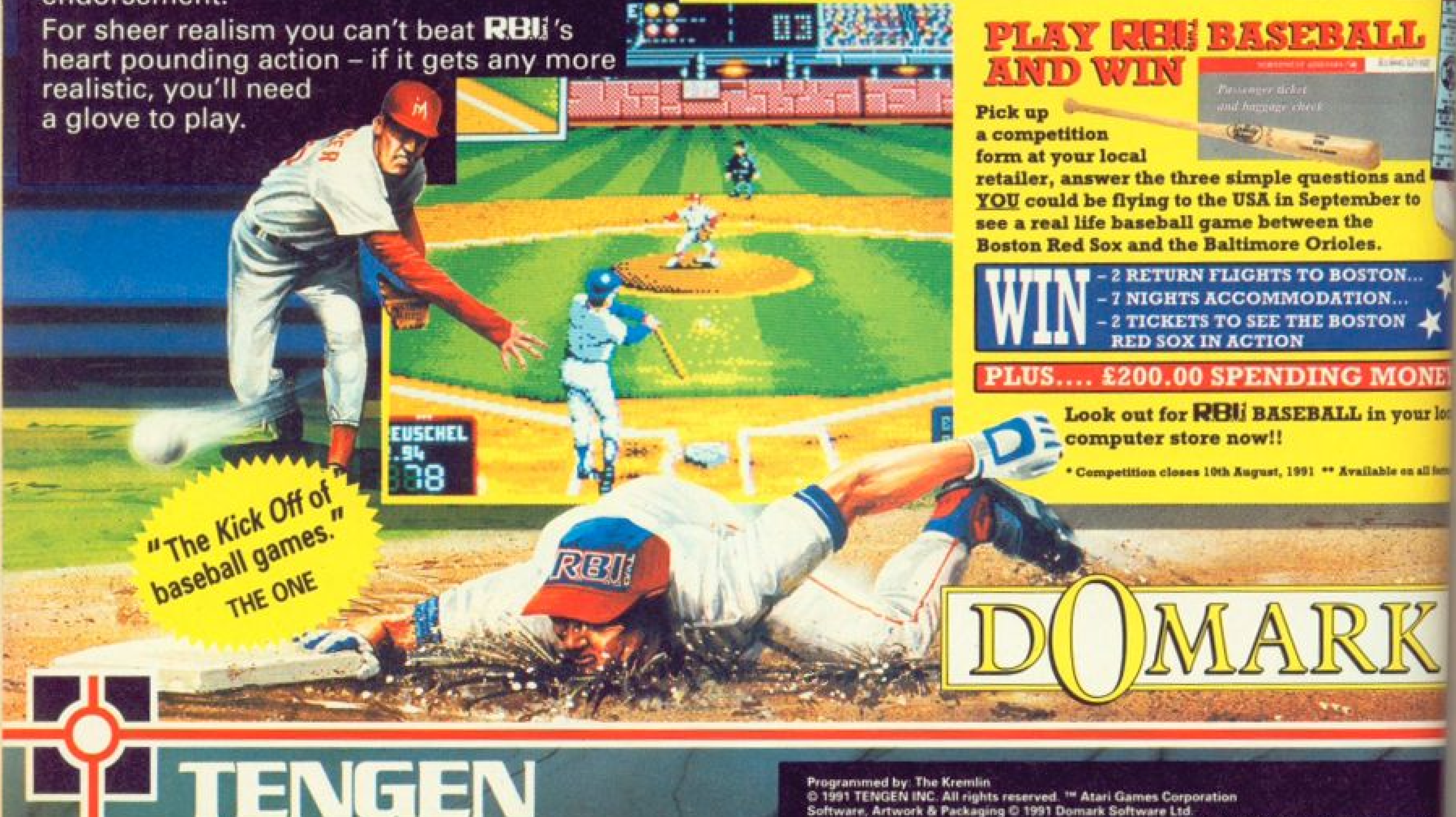

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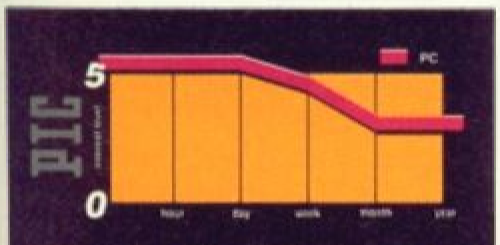
# SCREEN TEST

*Sonic The Hedgehog*, a new gaming cult or a blatant Mario rip-off. See page 54.

*Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* offers simulator depth with arcade blasting. Heard it all before? See page 58

## CONSOLE INVASION!

**Casting a casual eye over this month's list of software will reveal a far higher-than-normal level of console games; a situation which we are extremely happy about. Lynx owners can read about *four* new titles for their machine, Gamegear gamers likewise. There's a bunch of new sports games for the Famicom and Gameboy and some good old fashioned blastin' and kickin' on the Megadrive. Away you go!**



The packaging and presention are mediocre, but after a few minutes the depth of gameplay really bites. Unfortunately a repetitive challenge means it's downhill from there on...

**·The PIC – *Predicted Interest Curve* – is the most sophisticated reviewing tool around.**

**The curve is divided into six sections, indicating the player's adrenalin level after one minute, one hour, one day, one week, one month, and one year. And this can tell you a lot more about a game than just the interest levels...**

**The minute, hour, and day ratings can tell you a lot too. If there's a dip here, followed by a rise, you've got a game that may take a bit of getting into. Alternatively, the graphics may put you off for a while until the gameplay starts to grip. Check out the PIC comment for more details.**

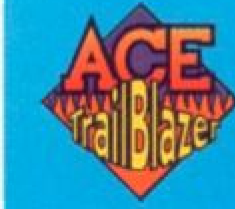
- Lots of cutesy characters
- Fascinating 3D sections.
- The two player link-up option for stage 16

- Twelve disks to swap!
- No colour on some stages
- No joystick or mouse control option

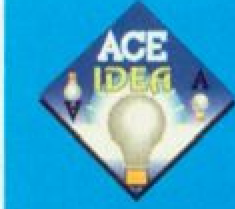
**We won't rate a game unless it represents what you'll find on the shelves. If a game's not finished, we won't rate it. Instead we give it an ACE Preplay verdict panel that tells you how we think it's shaping up. In most cases, a full review of the finished game will follow in a later issue.**

## ACE AWARDS

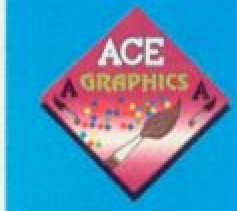
ACE always awards seals of approval for outstanding software performance. If a game really breaks the boundaries in sound, graphics, or originality you'll see the appropriate ACE Award flash on the review. Unless it's truly dire – in which case it'll get the ACE Turkey award. Software houses: you have been warned!



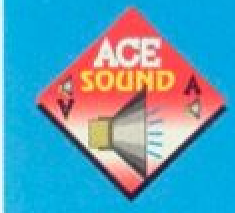
**ACE only awards this one to games of outstanding quality. A 900+ game is a classic title, recommended without hesitation.**



**Originality counts for a lot these days, and any games that have it deserve a special mention. This ACE award is reserved specifically for these rare games.**



**One of the first things to grab you in a game is its graphics. Games that redefine the state-of-the-art get this seal of approval from ACE.**



**Sound is the 'forgotten' aspect of games – but can make or break them. ACE only awards this one to brilliant use of audio in a game.**

## THE LINE UP

**Computer and Console *pages 54-82***

54 **SONIC THE HEDGEHOG** *Virgin*
58 **CHUCK YEAGER** *Electronic Arts*
60 **MARTIAN DREAMS** *Origin*
62 **PREHISTORIK** *Titus*
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67 **GHOST BATTLE** *Thallion*
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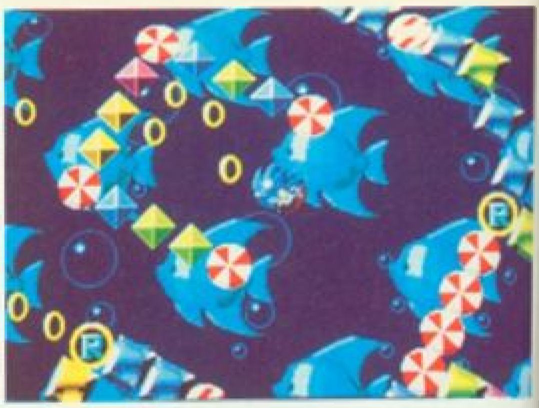
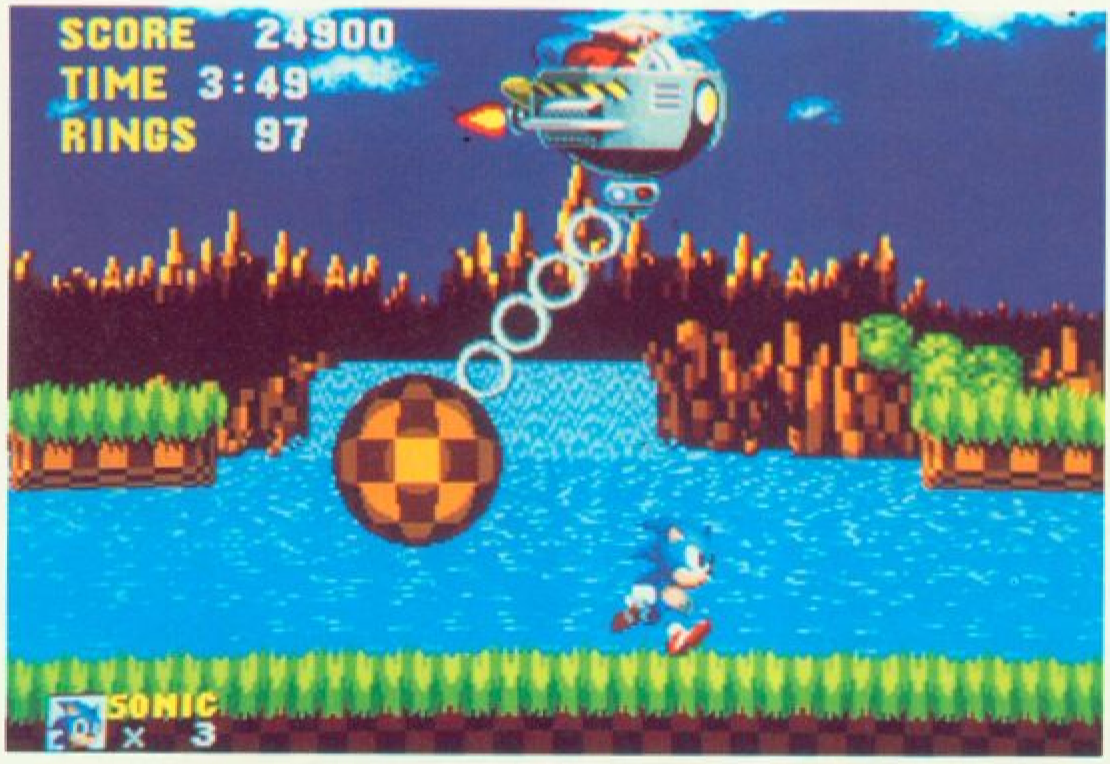


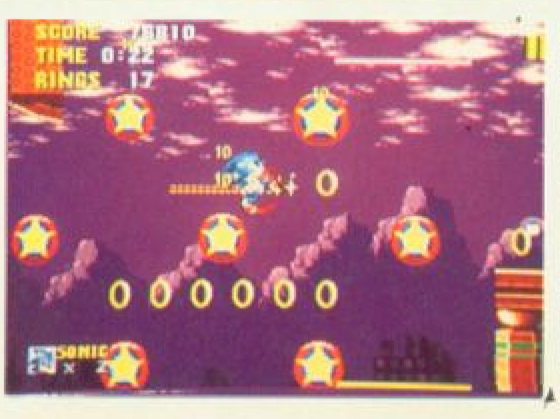
ACE TrailBlazer

# SONIC THE HEDGEHOG



**Move over Mario! Now we have a new cult gaming figure for the 90s courtesy of SEGA. But can he match Nintendo's pipe-fitting superstar?**

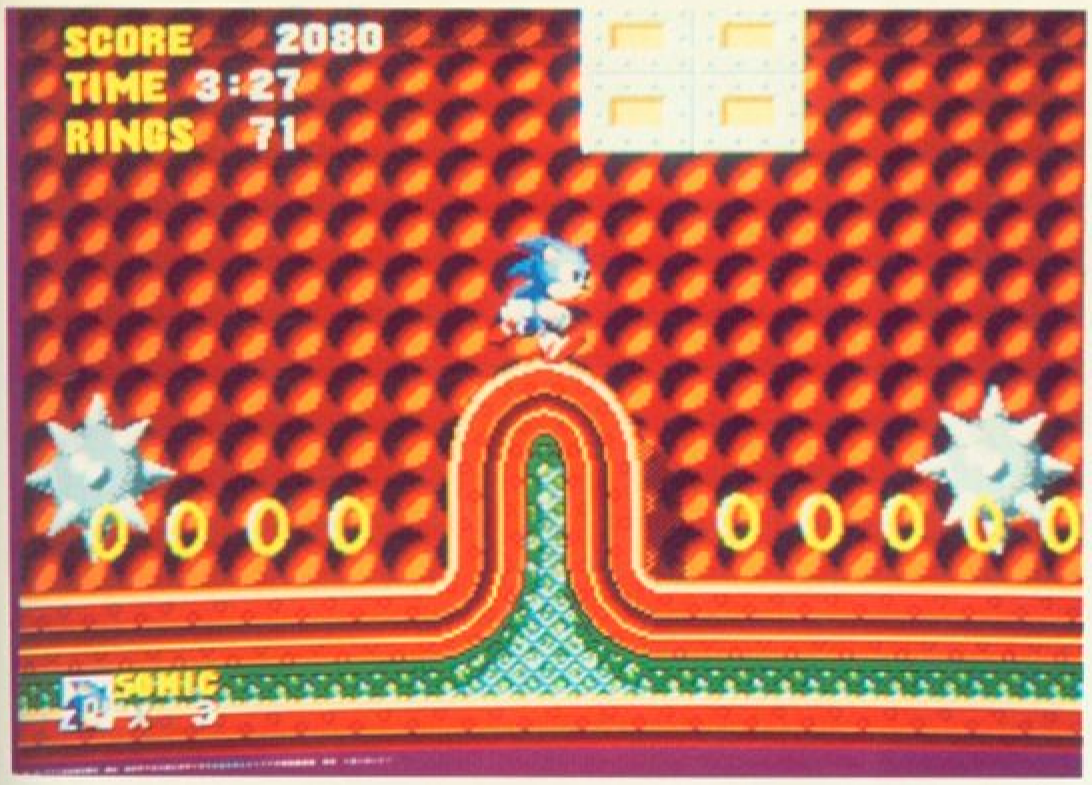
(Left) The evil Doctor Eggman awaits at the end of Green Hill Zone, flying high in his lethal ball-and-chain machine.
(Below left) Bonus points aplenty in Spring Yard's pinball section - bounce Sonic off those bumpers for ten points a time.

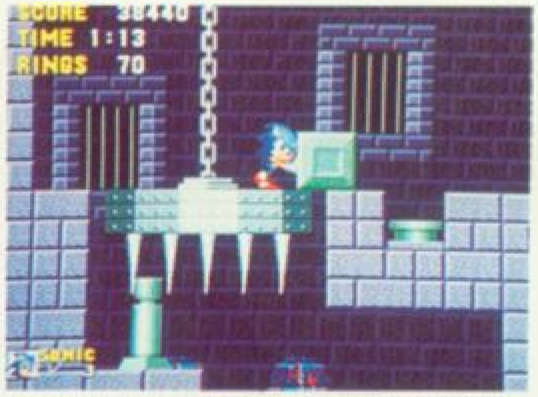


Frankly, I'm getting a little bored of it all. Mario this and Mario that. The way things are going, the little pest will be addressing us from the Oval Office before we know it. I'm not arguing with the games he stars in - finest quality throughout - it's just I think it's time for a change. A new people's champion. A new hero.

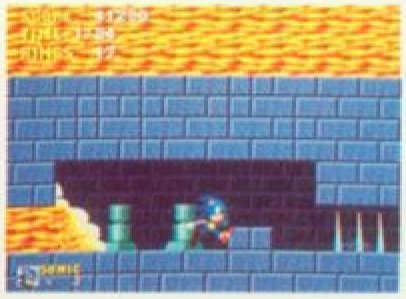
Sega obviously thinks so too. Its latest MegaDrive character is already being groomed for all kinds of Mario-style marketing opportunities. Chances are that this new pretender to the console crown will be propping up a freeway flyover long before he gets a chance to muscle in on Mario's action - but in the meantime the console debut of *Sonic the Hedgehog* (obviously the result of many a torturous brainstorming session in Sega's marketing department) is a real blinder.

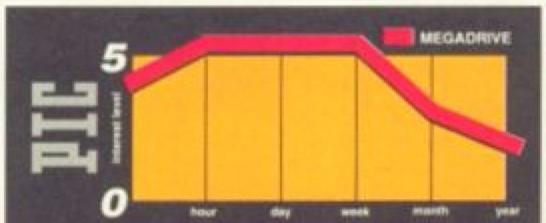
In the classic Mario tradition, Sonic, who's lovely and cute but not entirely unendowed in the special powers department, finds himself battling through a colourful and enemy-infested world in an attempt to rescue his fluffy chums from the clutches of the evil Doctor Eggy. Perils and





(Above) One of the many puzzles that awaits Sonic in Marble Zone - push the block onto the plunger to raise the portcullis that blocks you way. Simple when you think about it.
(Left) More dexterity required here in Spring Yard as Sonic attempts to avoid these two giant rolling maces AND collect the bonus rings into the bargain.
(Far left) The Special Stage, where the mystical Chaos Emeralds are begging to be collected. Tough, very tough.
(Below) Shades of Indiana Jones as Sonic races down a narrow corridor pursued by a column of flame - those spikes ahead won't be much help either.

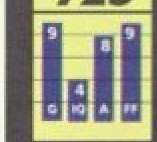




**Technically, one of the most impressive carts you'll ever slide into your slot. Invite some ST and Amiga owners round to see you play and watch their jaws drop slowly open as the game accelerates to speeds they've never dreamed of. Superb arcade-style music and professional presentation completes the fun equation nicely. Essential stuff.**

ACE RATING

**925**



MEGADRIVE

The game Megadrive owners have been gagging for - at last they've got something to smack their smug-faced Nintendo-owning mates with. Immediate appeal with plenty to keep you glued for at least a month, but once the game's clocked (which should take around that long), that PIC curve is going to dive off a cliff. It's still the best platform game the Megadrive has ever seen - is that Mario's knees we can hear knocking?

RELEASE DETAILS

| MEGADRIVE | £34.99 | OUT NOW |
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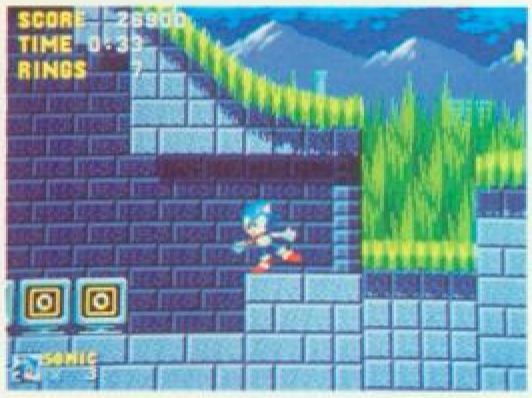
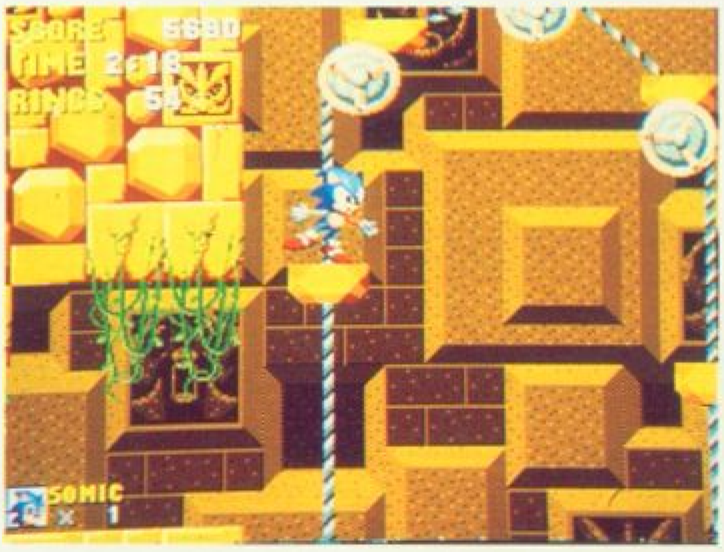
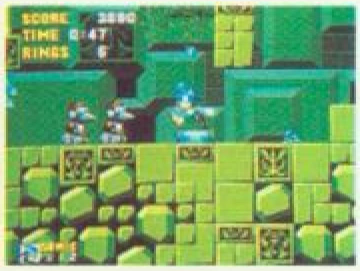


(Above) Just one of the many secret rooms waiting to be discovered - this one in Marble Zone is worth 30 gold rings in total.
(Left) More *Temple Of Doom* antics here, with Sonic hanging on to this primitive pulley system in the watery Labrynth Zone.
(Below) Glug! Sonic's running low on oxygen - a geyser to the right should prove helpful on that score. Meanwhile, these two moles need to be dealt with.





platforms are still the order of the day, but emphasis has been placed firmly on variation too, and elements of *Rick Dangerous* and *Strider* aren't difficult to spot along the way.

In order to be best, Sonic must make his way through six zones, each comprising three "acts", or areas. Each world has a graphical theme which is consistent throughout its three stages - Green Hill is all grassy pastures and flowers, Marble is decked out in Greek-style pillars and columns, Spring Yard looks like a surreal version of Las Vegas, Labyrinth is understandably maze-like, Starlight is a cosmic space-type affair, and the final zone, Clockwork, is filled with dangerous high-tech machinery. All treacherous territory for a hedgehog with nothing but a pair of gloves and training shoes on.

Sonic's not totally without protection, though. Like his Nintendo "rival", he's particularly blessed in the jumping department, enabling him to dispose of most types of adversary with a well-timed descent onto their bonces. His real skill, however, and the one that gives him his unusual name, is his ability to roll up into a ball (as is a hedgehog's wont), and rotate at supersonic speed, leaving his spines to do the business on any adversary who gets in his way. Sonic's spiky form also comes in handy when dealing with enemies from above - like birds - as he also goes into "temporary" sonic mode when jumping, rendering him deadly to anything he touches.

The most common objects in Sonic's world are shiny gold rings which can be found in abundance just about everywhere - even though it's not always easy to get to them. Like the coins in *Mario*, they're cashed in for an extra life when a hundred are collected. As an added bonus, the rings also act as a kind of buffer for Sonic's mishaps. As long as you're carrying any number of rings, any contact with a bad guy isn't fatal - instead Sonic is knocked back and drops all his rings. It's vital that as many as possible are collected up again fast before they disappear, as if Sonic is caught short without any rings to protect him, it's instant death.

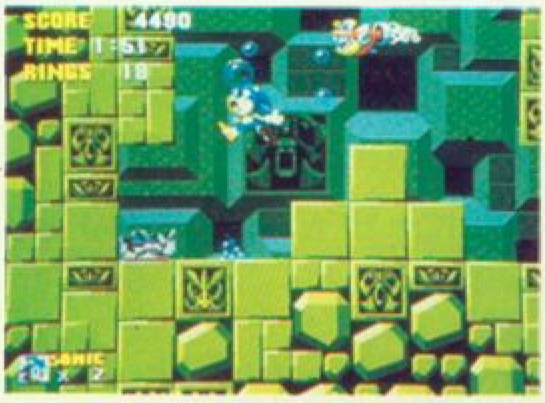
Also littered around the landscapes to help Sonic on his quest are all manner of special bonuses hidden inside TV sets - which are often hidden themselves. The most useful of the lot comes in the form of a sparkling starfield which surrounds Sonic and makes him more or less invulnerable; he can walk on spikes, through fire and enemies, the lot - only falling off the bottom of the screen is fatal. Unfortunately, this effect is only temporary - much more lasting but not quite as useful is a mini-shield that allows our prickly friend to make one mistake without having to sacrifice his ring collection. To be filed under the slightly-less-useful-but-still-worth-getting heading are the shoes, which speed up Sonic (and the accompanying music) for a short time, and treasure boxes, worth ten rings apiece.

The primary feature of *Sonic* which separates it from Mario's escapades is the staggering size and almost unlimited accessibility of the play area. Each area really is HUGE, with the landscape extending in almost every direction imaginable, and there are no restrictions on speed either. When blasted upwards or along by a spring-plunger, or when entering one of the special short-cut airducts, Sonic goes supersonic, accelerating the on-screen action to incredible speeds - certainly faster than the MegaDrive has ever been pushed before, and it's an astounding sight to behold. Momentum has been thoughtfully implemented, so that when Sonic is travelling at such high speeds, he's more or less invulnerable, simply by virtue of the fact that he's moving so damn fast. He hurtles right over deadly lava pits and abysses and cuts through his adveraries like a hot knife through butter. The only problem is that, at such a tremendous rate of knots, Sonic is likely to miss out on the aforementioned bonuses, which often take care to find.

A nice touch is that Sonic can take things as fast or as slowly as he likes, since there's no time limit to force him towards the goal-line. Instead, a clock ticks upwards, with bonus points awarded for how quickly the level was completed. As a result, the player is given much more opportunity to explore and discover the game's intricacies at leisure, with still some incentive to get a move on - pats on the back all round for that one.

In its attempt to create a game that would do for the MegaDrive what Mario has done for Nintendo, Sega deserves credit for not coming up with just another unispired clone, but a game that's genuinely original in its approach to the platform genre and still immense fun to play. Admittedly there are infuriating aspects, like the tiresome way in which Sonic sometimes has to negotiate steep hills and the occasionally fiddly control, but these are but minor bumps in what is otherwise a lovely, smooth velvet blanket of playability. It's difficult without being frustrating, addictive without being repetetive and altogether a joy to play.

● **Gary Whitta**



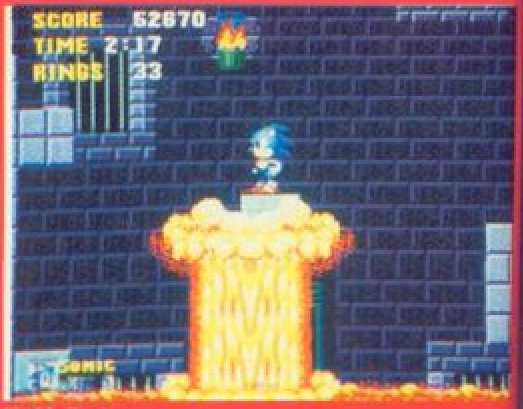
## THE LEVELS

### GREEN HILL ZONE

Designed as a taster of things to come, so as to ease even the greenest of gamesplayers into the style of *Sonic* gently, the Green Hill looks to be pretty standard stuff - but don't let appearances deceive you. There are plenty of torturous twists and shortcuts to be found among the vegetation. One of this zone's more interesting features (and one that is used throughout the game), is a loop-the-loop corkscrew that Sonic can only get round if he takes a long run-up and builds up enough speed. Care must be taken when coming out of the loop (invariably at high speed) to not run headfirst into a buffer which could send you flying right back to where you came from. The evil Doctor Eggy awaits at the end of the third act in his jet-powered flying machine, bent on stopping you from reaching to the next level. Armed with a hefty ball and chain, he's a pretty touch customer - the only way Sonic can see him off is to use the special raised platforms to jump onto Eggy's head. Don't think you've seen the last of him once he's defeated though - he returns at the end of the next, and every other level, with a tougher weapon every time.

### MARBLE ZONE

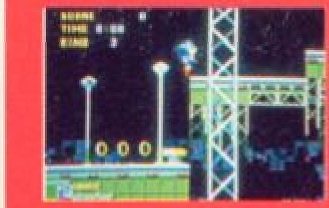
The style of gameplay changes dramatically for the second zone, where things start to get very Greek in terms of graphic style. In each act, the basic setup is the same: after a few screens of bouncing on aliens heads and running about, the action takes Sonic underground and into more *Rick Dangerous*-style territory. Now it's time to engage those grey cells in the solving of some basic puzzles (using blocks to weight down plungers which in turn open doors and so on) and become even more adept with the joypad as the game starts to throw some really hideous stuff at you for the first time. Jumping across a sea of fire on floating blocks, dodging great spiked weights that descend from the ceiling on chains and keeping ahead of a great column of flame as it pursues you down a narrow corridor is no mean feat. Manage to survive that lot and it's back up to the surface for the final dash to the finish line.

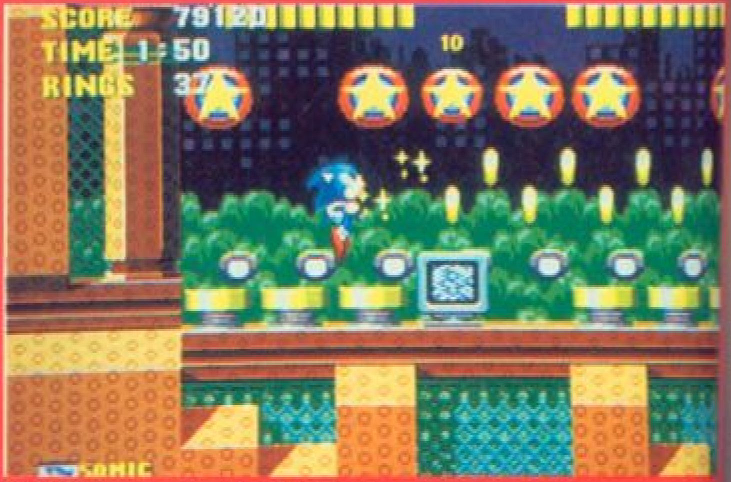


Marble Zone

### SPRING YARD ZONE

The third level takes its rather unlikely name from the inordinate amount of springy plungers that are vital to Sonic's progress. Each of the three acts has been built with platforms at such giddying heights and distances that only use of the multitude of bouncy buttons will get Sonic anywhere. There are plenty of original touches in evidence, such as one particularly bizarre scene where platforms are replaced by Pinball score-bumpers, allowing Sonic to amass a few extra points by using himself as the ball!





*(Left Top)*
Green Hill Zone
*(Left Middle)*
Starlight Zone
*(Left Bottom)*
Clockwork Zone

Spring Yard Zone

### LABYRINTH ZONE

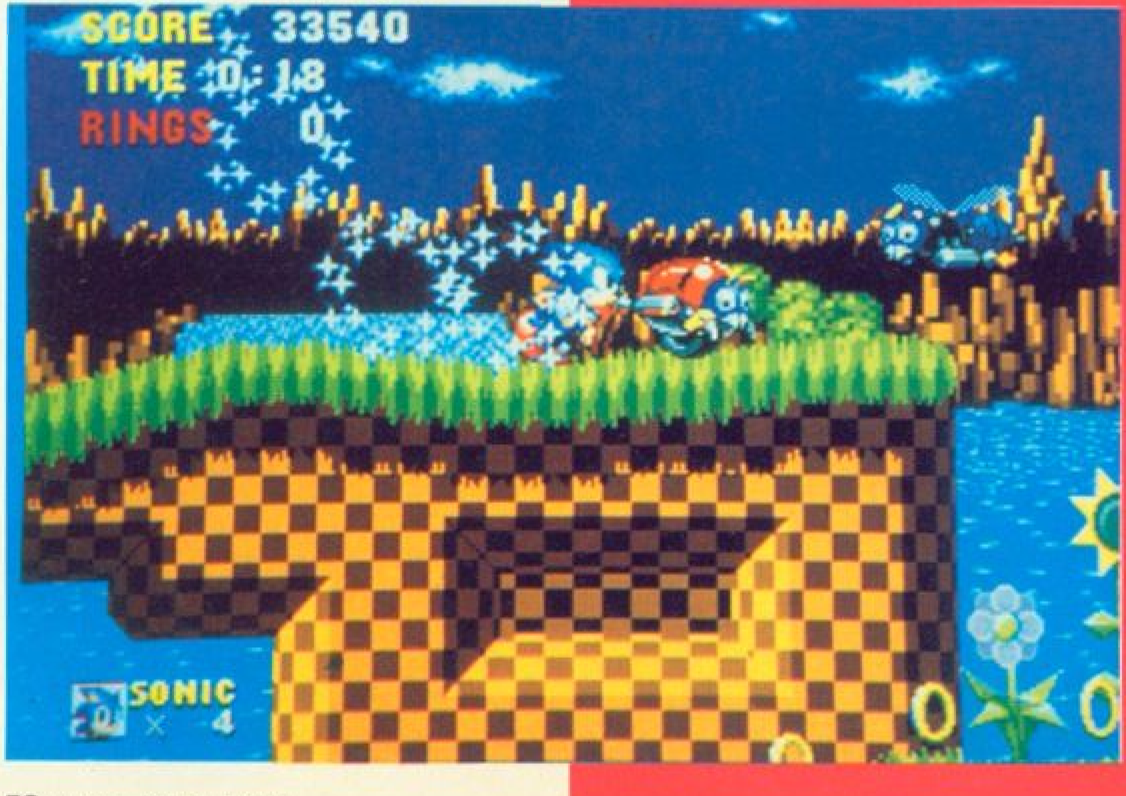
More shades of *Rick Dangerous*, now with a little Strider added to the mix make up this forth level, where the backgrounds are decked out in shiny aztec-style gold and sloping ledges make platform-negotiation skills all the more vital. A new feature makes its entrance here - water! As the tide-level rises, much of the action takes place underwater, with enhcanced momentum to provide realistic aquatic movement. Hedgehogs can't breathe underwater, so Sonic must constantly grab bubbles of air as they rise from the seabed in order to top up his oxygen supply. There are no shortage of marine-style bad guys to hamper your progress still further, and as the zone's name suggests the layout of these levels is distinctly maze-like, making it easy to lose your bearings if you don't keep your wits about you.

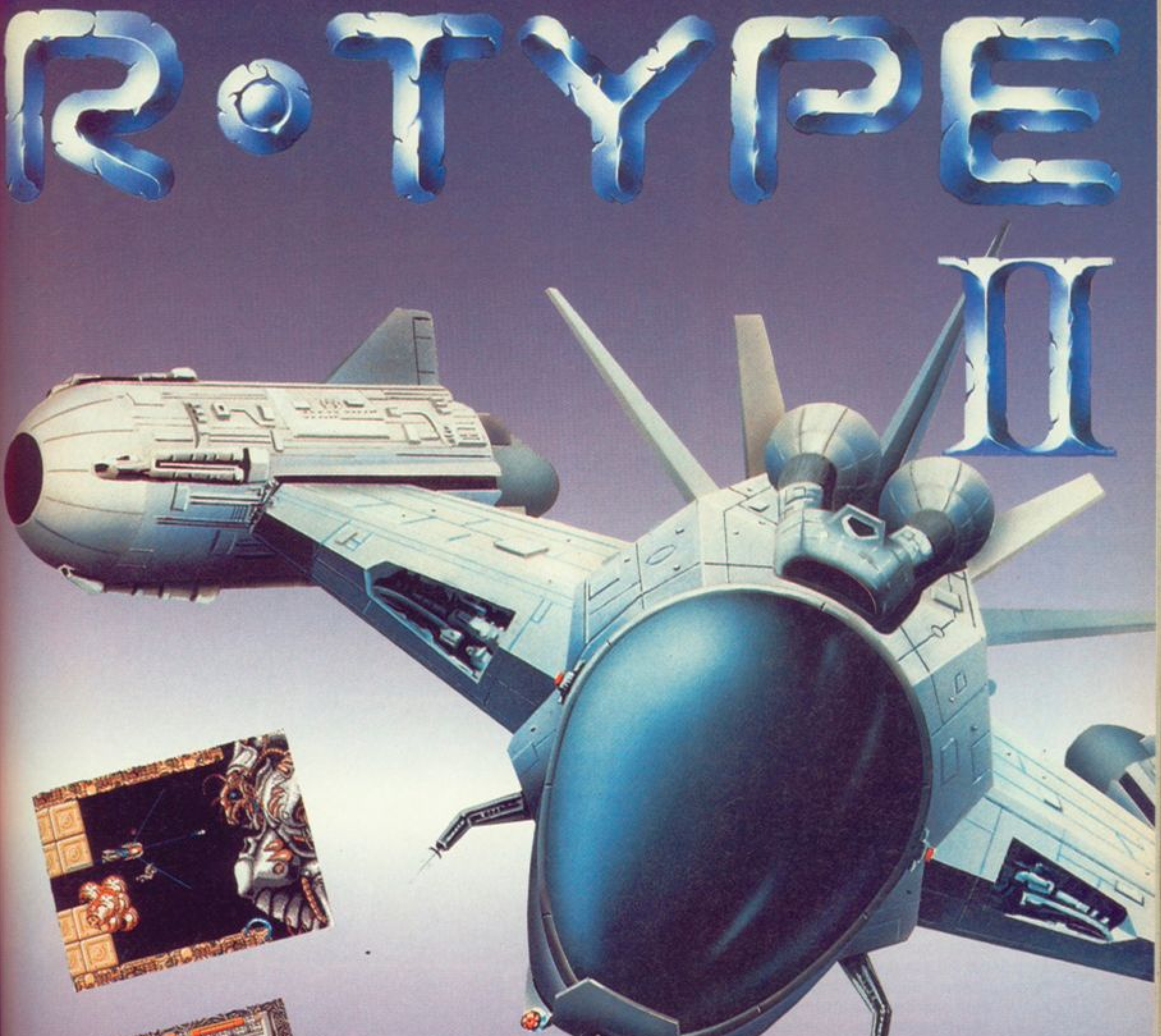
### STARLIGHT ZONE

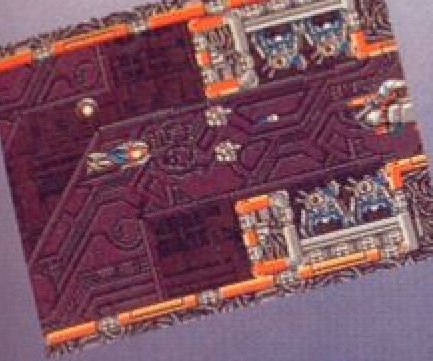
Best not to say too much about the later levels, suffice to say that this zone is very spacey and high-tech. Like Spring Yard, bouncy plungers play a big part in propelling Sonic between the many high-rise platforms - and, of course, it's very very hard.

### CLOCKWORK ZONE

The final challenge! As the name suggests, big clunking machinery is the setting here, with Sonic tested to the limit by... well, wait and see.







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## THE FIRST WAVE WAS EASY.
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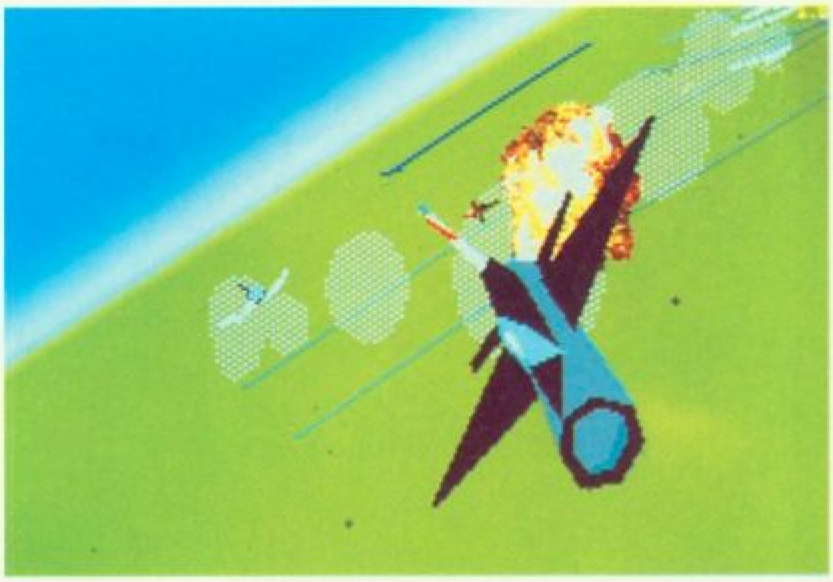
Emergency News Bulletin 07.63.... Attention all Starfighter pilots....The evil Bydo Empire is out for revenge.... Stronger, faster and more dangerous than before....the attack waves have started....a remodeled "R-9" Starfighter is armed and ready for you....proceed to the battlefront immediately....the nightmare has returned....

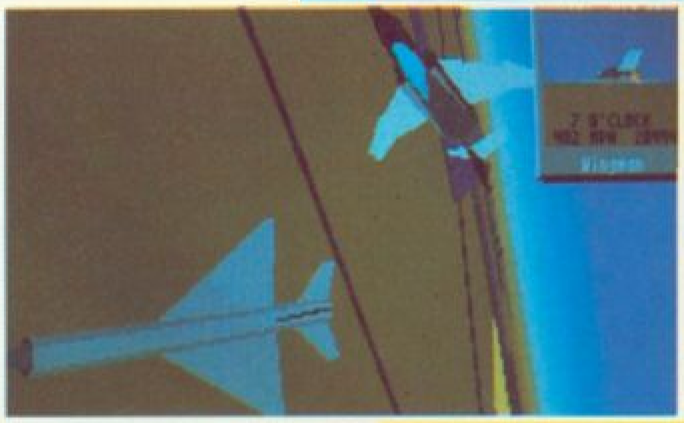
ACTIVISION

ACE TrailBlazer

# CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR



**At last! After two outings of pacifist flying, the first man to break the sound barrier is giving you the chance to break some heads - with a little help from ELECTRONIC ARTS**



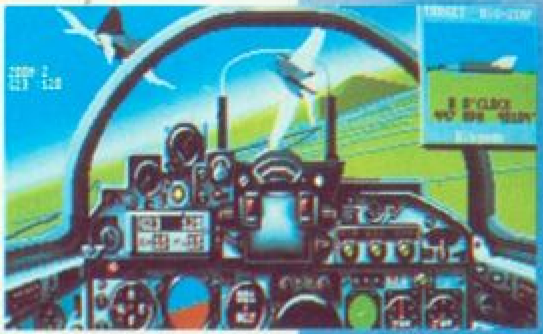
High above the skies, and pulling a considerable number of G's in ruthless pursuit of this lone MiG. A target box indicates that your missile computer has already got an eye on it, but you'll need a better lock than this to be sure of a hit. And watch out for the ground...

And about time too! We all know the story: after breaking the sound barrier, test-piloting all sorts of dangerous new aircraft and generally being an all-round great guy, Chuck Yeager finally quit the corps and decided to spend his precious twilight years endorsing flight simulations for EA. The grizzled old speed freak helped pruduce two such products, which while technically exemplary and realistic, suffered from one slight problem: There weren't any guns in them!

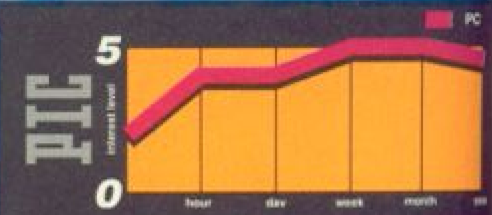
According to EA, the lack of combat has always been the major gripe with those flying Yeager Airlines - the pacifistic approach may be more realistic, but there's just not enough to do. Chuck's third effort, however, changes all that. Gone are the days of flying free as a bird up among the cotton-wool clouds, and in are the days of burning wreckage, twisted metal and screaming pilots engulfed in flames after a missile hit. That's more like it!

As in Chuck's two previous aerial escapades, the emphasis is set firmly on realism and detail. The choice is yours to fly planes from any of the USA's three major punch-ups of the last fifty years - WW2, Korea and Vietnam - as well as a variety of modern-day jets from both sides of the iron curtain. There's a multitude of tailor-made single missions to fly, a comprehensive campaign mode spanning over 15 missions and a custom mission designer allowing you to put yourself in any situation you fancy, from a duckshoot with a swarm of idiotic opponents to a one-on-one with a pilot that would make Val Kilmer look like a rookie. Whichever option you choose, it's not all "seek-and-destroy" dogfighting. Missions include protecting a bomber formation from the enemy's defending fighters, strafing and bombing ground targets.

Despite the game's violent new overtones, it's still a trainer at heart and every effort has been made to ensure you know your stuff. The manual provides a comprehensive Flight School program that takes you from the basics - level flight, banking and rolling - to neckbreaking aerobatics such as the High-G Barrel Roll and Spiral Dive. The Test Flight option allows you to try them all out free from enemy attack - you'd be well advised to take advantage of this facility, as taking to the skies against pro opponents on your maiden flight will only end in tears - and a loss in confidence. Remember, all good things come to those who wait.



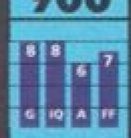
This is more like it! You're directly behind and above your prey (the best position for attack in air combat), and though the bogey's pulling G's to get out of trouble, that locked-on target box means he's only a trigger-press away from death.



**Ideal and very substantial fare for the more serious simulation connoisseur. Perseverance is required to get the most out of it, but it's well worth the effort. It's got The Right Stuff.**

ACE RATING

**900**



IBM PC

Exquisite VGA graphics create an eye-pleasing environment, and those with sound boards are in for an aural treat too. In a word (well, three actually), very nice indeed.

RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
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| IBM PC | £29.99 | OUT NOW |
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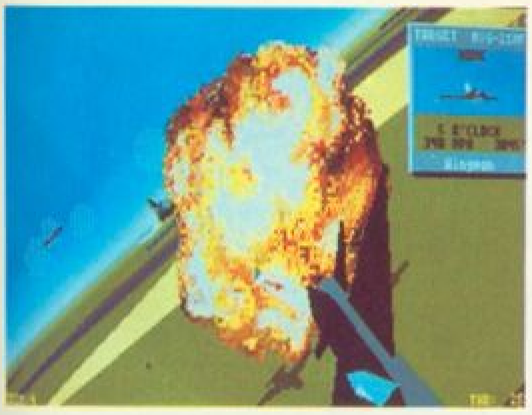
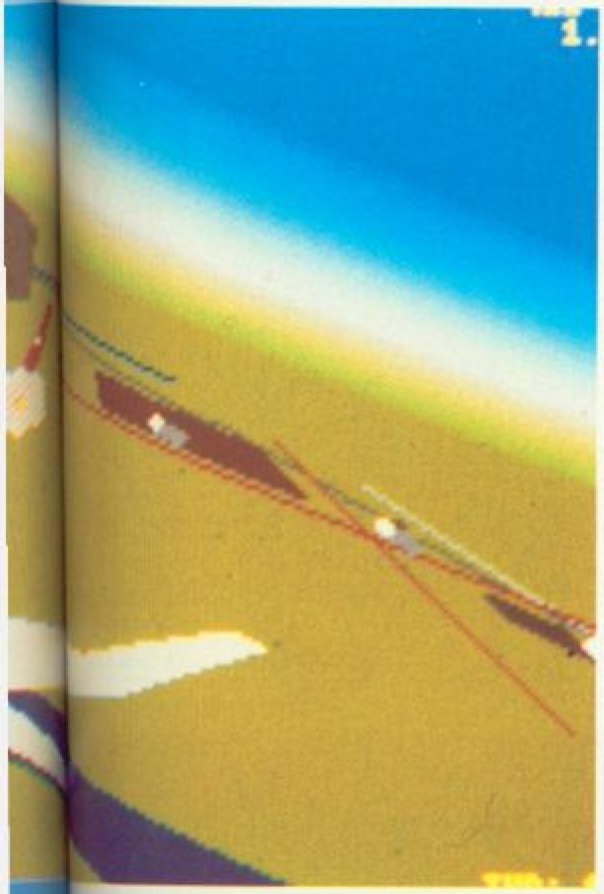


Chuck does more than just lend his name to the game - he pops up during pre-flight to provide his insight on how to approach missions, and appears in inset form during combat to give vital words of advice. Here , an enemy plane is approaching fast from behind and the pilot is taking Chuck's advice by breaking hard left.

> "It's always better to be the hammer than the nail."
>
> - General Chuck Yeager

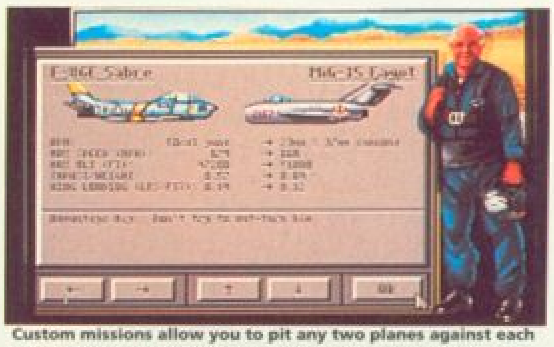
# COMBAT



An added boon comes in the form of the Flight Recorder. Everything you do from take-off to landing (or death, as the case often is) is recorded and can be played back either in the air or on the ground in order to see what happened and why. That brilliant maneouvre, that embarassing nosedive - it's all here to see from every camera angle conceivable. Video controls allow you to skim through the playback, replay favourite moments again and again, and save favourite replays to disk to impress your buddies with later. It's without doubt the game's most invaluable training aid - allowing the pilot to view his performance from a different perspective allows him to assess his performance more accurately - as well as see why things went wrong.

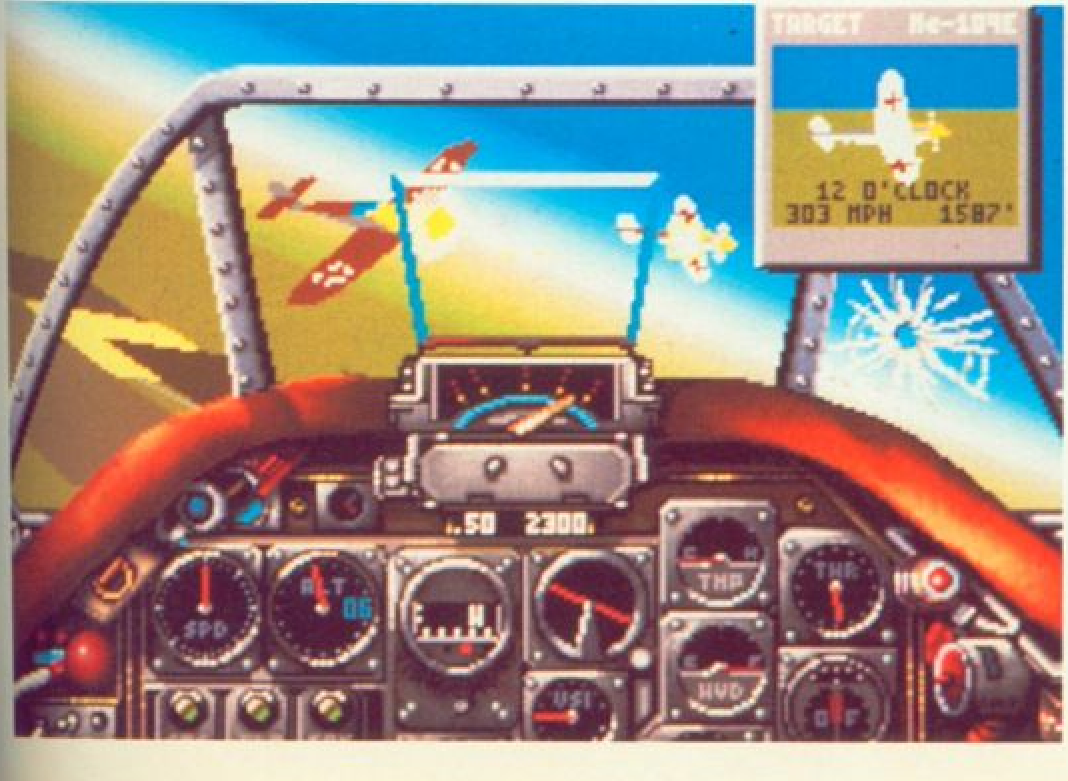
Realism is still the gameplay lynchpin, and the designers have gone to pains to ensure that each of the planes, including the defunct historical models, have been reproduced accurately both in terms of performance and cockpit instrumentation. But there are still plenty of aesthetic frills, including the ubiquitous outside plane and missile views.

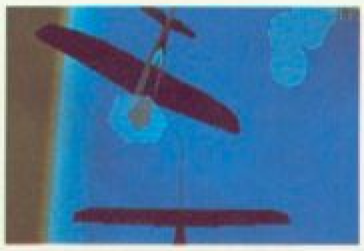
For those who prefer dizzying arrays of dials and technical authenticity to the more simplistic arcade aerobatics of, say, *Jetfighter II*, *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* is a must. The image of the game as more of a training aid than a straight flight simulation helps to re-inforce the feeling of realism, and the later parts of the bulky manual - which interacts well with the program itself - make genuinely interesting reading. Definitely NOT for boy racers who can't handle more than up-down-left-right-fire, but if you seek a more challenging and longer-lasting experience, you can't go wrong.



Custom missions allow you to pit any two planes against each other. In this pre-flight stage, Chuck is on hand to lend his expert views on the match-up, comparing the two planes' stats to see who has the advantage. In this case, enhanced maneouvrability gives the MiG-15 Fagot the upper hand against the faster F-86E Sabre.

● **Gary Whitta**





(Right) As well as video replays, the black box flight recorder can provide tactical wireframe diagrams of an entire sortie. Real fighter training schools use a system remarkably similar...

(Left) DAKKA DAKKA BOOM! Flying high in your P-51 Mustang, an ME-109 at twelve o'clock high is causing problems - as indicated by the bullet-holes in your cockpit shield. A damage report is available at all times during flight to let you know how badly you're hit.

North American P-51D Mustang

# Martian Dreams

## Is ORIGIN's latest 'Worlds of Ultima' release just a tall story?

Roberta Williams, the lady who pens the *King's Quest* series for Sierra, recently protested that she didn't think of her titles as 'games' but regarded herself as a storyteller. *Kings Quest* and other Sierra titles sell by the million, so there must be something in this story stuff.

Judging by *Martian Dreams*, that's a ten-four, buddy boy. This game features the sort of scenario that Hollywood moguls and struggling script editors go all wobbly at the knees over.

Imagine all the 19th century characters you'd like to meet, plonk them in a mythical space ship and then – for added sci-fi interest – blast them off to Mars. The result: a mesmerising blend of *Forbidden Planet* and *Murder on the Orient Express* with a small cast of celebrity oddballs wandering round Mars, forming cliques and, if not actually trying to bump each other off, certainly heading that way.

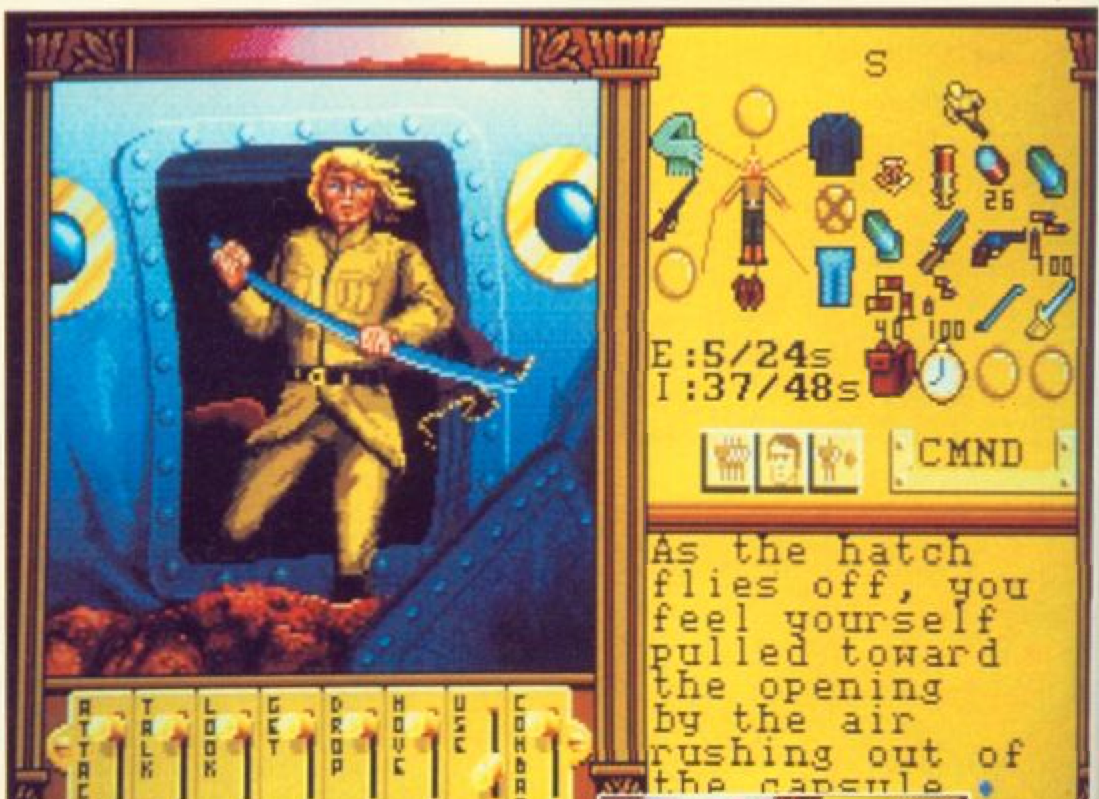
Your game objective is to rescue these worthies from the Red Planet. In doing so you are first blasted off in a 19th century Space Bullet (powered, ho ho, by Phlogistonite – don't you just love it?) just like the one that two years previously launched itself prematurely during a PR booze-up with the celebs onboard. You are accompanied on your rescue mission by journalist Nelly Bly (love interest, judging by her appearance, but the program doesn't understand any rude words), Sigmund Freud, Dr Blood, and Nikola Tesla (inventor of the AC motor).

Waiting to greet you at the other end, you naively imagine, will be nineteen notables, ranging from Calamity Jane to Lenin. When you arrive, however, you discover that the boys and girls have stumbled over a long-defunct Martian culture and, partly as a result of their discoveries and partly because of their massive egos, have all formed little cliques scattered about the planet. Some of them also appear to have gone a little potty in the process, possibly due to experimentation with Martian 'Dream Machines'.

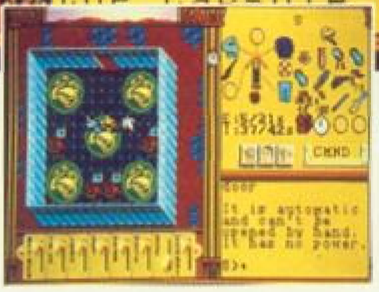
Your task therefore is pretty complex. First, you must locate the nobs and get them back to Earth. This is not at all easy as some of them have got themselves into some particularly nasty scrapes. In the process you must explore the planet, and that's not easy either – it's teeming with vicious vegetables that make your average sabre-toothed tiger look like a pussy willow. Finally, you must make sense of all this Martian techno-culture and find out why the inhabitants all died out...or did they?

The result is definitely one of the better RPG scenarios of recent years and the message is clear – this is one tall story that'll have you over the moon in more ways than one.

● **Steve Cooke**

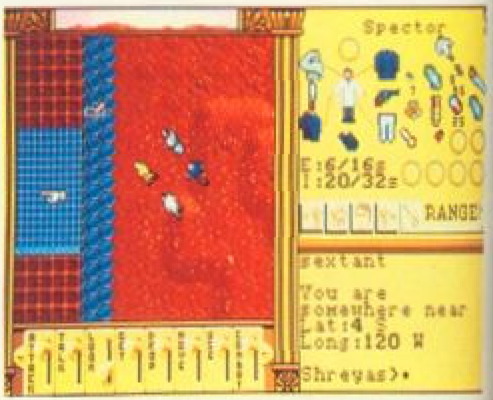


As the hatch flies off, you feel yourself pulled toward the opening by the air rushing out of the capsule



Door

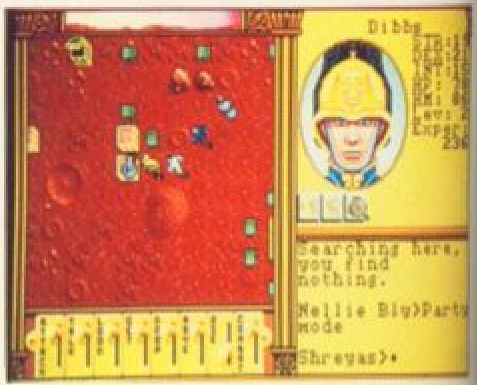
It is automatic and can't be opened by hand. It has no power.



sextant

You are somewhere near Lat:4 S Long:120 W

Shreyas>



Searching here, you find nothing.

Nellie Bly>Party mode

Shreyas>

## QUICK START MARS

One of the best things about Martian Dreams is the game structure. Many RPG's let themselves down (Ultima VI was a prime example) by confronting the player with too great a challenge in the early stages.

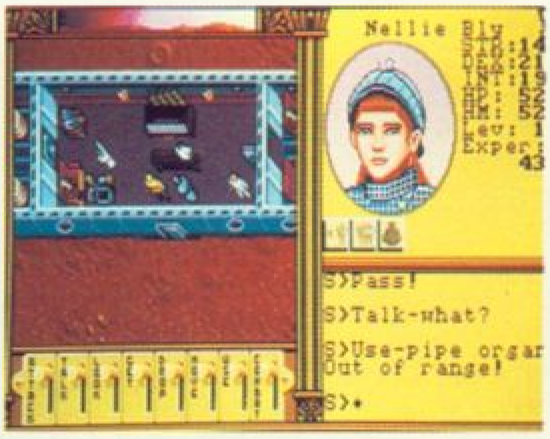
Usually this means a vast, meaningless map which you have to spend hours wandering around trying to find interesting places. Mars, however, is divided up into a grid system and you can check your position at any time using a sextant. To make matters even easier, you get the first interesting destination given to you as soon as you question your companions, and this leads you to another party member who is also a prolific source of info on the Red Planet. Of course, you can still go off exploring and the map included with the game, although at first glance rather featureless, does in fact have many pointers to places of interest.

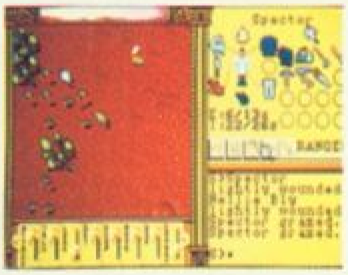
The interface in *Martian Dreams* is superb. The game is entirely mouse controlled, but you can also use the keyboard for shortcut commands if you want. By using a clever 'default command' system, you can perform common actions (e.g. look) with a single click on the appropriate object, person, or place.

The new Ultima system also features a clever character interaction system that not only delivers some quite lengthy interactions with major characters but also highlights 'key-words' in their dialogue that can be used as a basis for further interrogation, saving you from endlessly typing in words and getting no response.

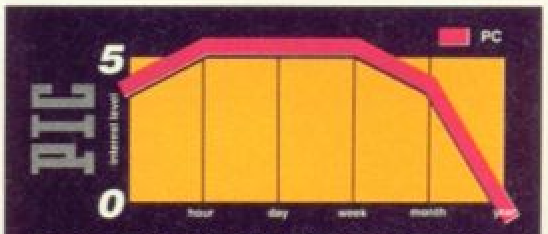
The end result is a game that manages to be both a cracking yarn and a corking interactive experience at the same time: quite an achievement.

(Top left) Your first sight of Mars as you force open the hatch of the Space Bullet in an early animated sequence. The graphic inventory on the right of the screen bears testimony to some concerted object gathering in the Bullet before you decided it was safe to leave. (Left) Evidence of Martian civilisation - above, some form of temple? And below, just what does that lever (beside a bridge over one of the canals) do? Later (bottom left), you'll find the site of the 1893 expedition, but, apart from Dibbs (pictured), the only signs of the stranded celebs are some empty chairs and scattered possessions





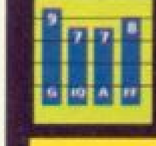
These Space Bullets (above) are extremely luxurious – this one even has an organ. (Left) Your under attack by Jumping Beans. OK, they're tiny, but they're extremely vicious. You have been warned. (Below) Freudian character creation...



There's a slightly tacky feel to the booklets and other packaging bumf, but the game soon gets you going. Interest level rockets after about three hours playing, by which time your characters are gaining experience and the scope of the challenge begins to bite. It doesn't let up until you crack it...

**ACE RATING**

**928**

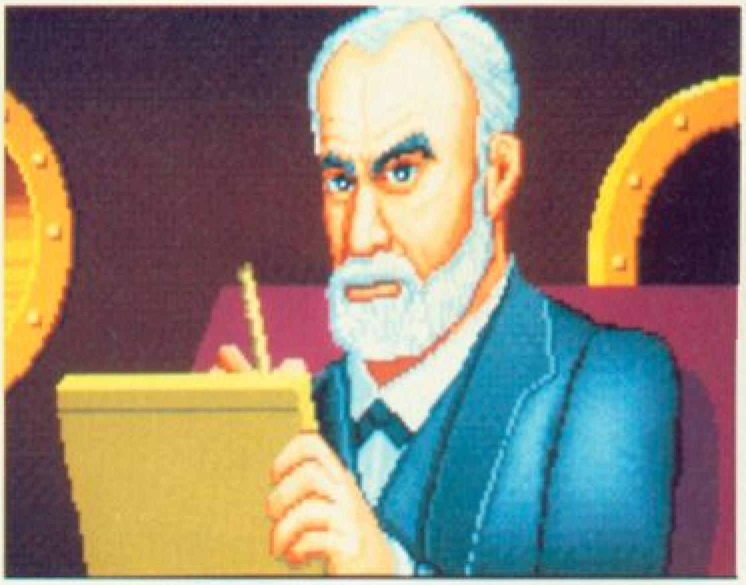


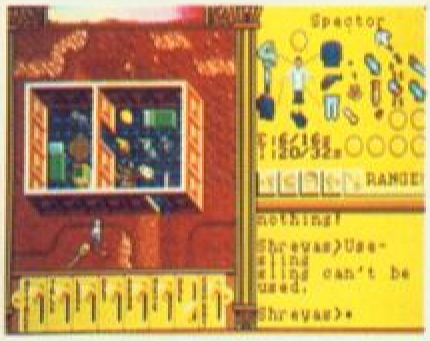
### IBM PC

A sound board is a real bonus for this game, since the accompanying effects and music are superb. You'll also need at least 5Mbytes of hard disk space, a 286 or higher, and VGA graphics. Even then, the action tends to slow down a bit when there are lots of monsters in the vicinity, but the game always shines through...

### RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| IBM PC | £36.99 | OUT NOW |
| AMIGA | £TBA | TBA |



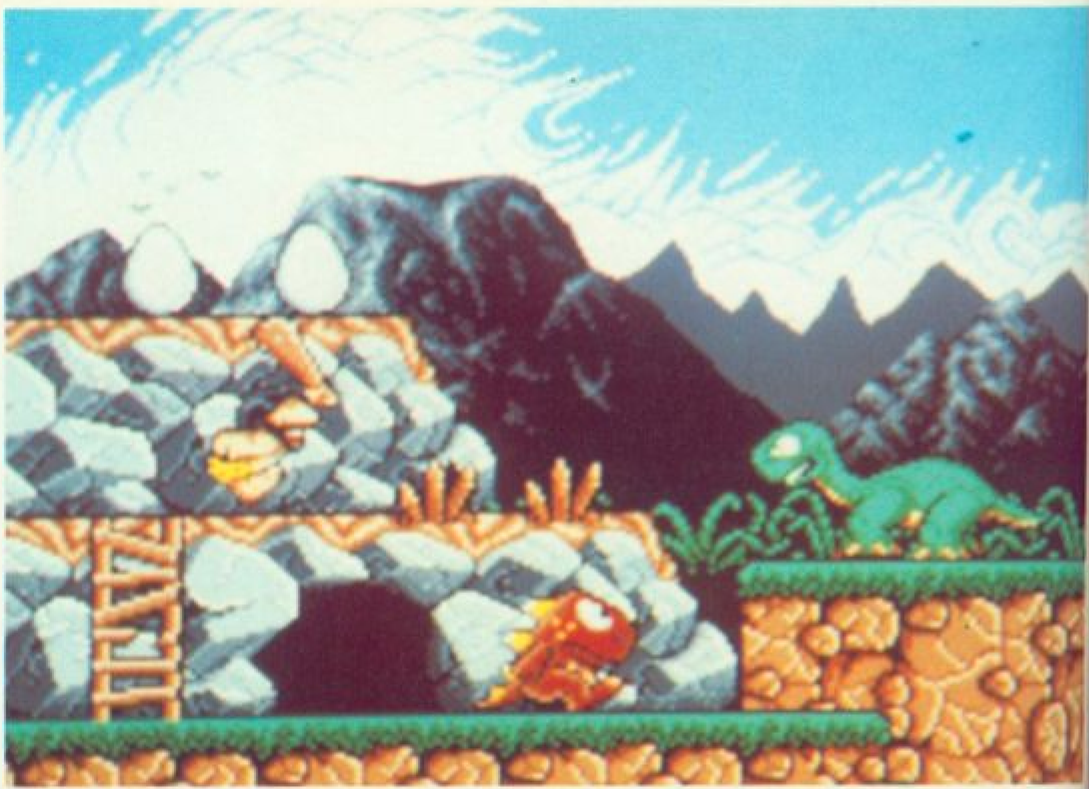


(Above) Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickock are shacking up together (literally). Just two of the celebs who have gone native during their two year confinement on Mars, they offer you a helping hand in return for favours – which can prove fatal

## TRAIL BLAZING NARRATIVE

Check out these winning features that put Martian Dreams into the exclusive ACE Trail Blazer category...

- Professional story structure, written by experienced authors, puts hefty narrative interest and atmosphere into the game
- Superlative interface allows complex interaction with characters, objects, and locations without getting in the way of the story
- Still the best combat system of all RPGs, allowing each member of your party four automatic combat options or full manual control
- Authentic scenario details, including many nice touches relating to real historical figures
- Highly original character generation system – you get interviewed by Freud!
- Clever game structure (see Quick Start Mars panel) to keep interest high from the beginning right through to the final screen
- Best use to date of a software 'engine' to generate different scenarios (Ultima VI and Savage Empire to date, more to follow)



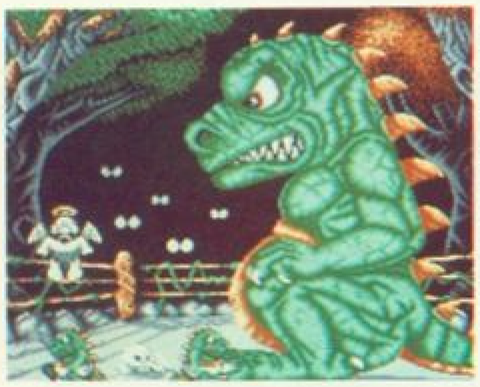
Meet Grawagars, a hairy hungry caveman. He lives in a world populated by savage dinosaurs, blissfully unaware that he shouldn't have evolved until several million years after the great lizards were mysteriously wiped out (Grawagars' fault, maybe?). And in this savage world there is only one noise louder than the roar of the mighty Tyrannosaurus Rex - the rumble of Grawagars' stomach.

So off Grawagars trots on a seven stage flick-screen hunt for flesh. Nothing - neither reptile, fish nor fowl - is safe from his voracious predatory ambitions. A couple of well-placed swipes from Grawagars' giant club will stun the wandering creatures, allowing him to lunch on them... before they lunch on him, with any luck.

Careful investigation of every cave and grotto will reveal a veritable cornucopia of fruit and veg that all help fill Grawagars' seemingly bottomless pit of a stomach. And occasionally he may even stumble across 'ye olde power uppe' (it seems some things have never changed) to aide him.

# PREHISTORIK

## Before the Quest for Fire there was the Quest for Food. TITUS go hunting...



**After hackin' and munchin' your way through seemingly endless screens of dinosaurs, you'll face an end-of-level baddy. This one needs repeated whacking in the foot while baby Rexs attack from either side.**

But there's no time to sight see. Grawagars must reach the end of the level, with sufficient food down his gullet, before the timer (his biological clock?) reaches zero. Then there's a head-to-head with a giant meany before the quest can continue in an even more exotic locale populated by ever deadlier food... er.... sorry, foes.

### THE GIFT OF LAUGHTER

Given the scenario and game style it's hard to avoid comparisons with the brilliant *Chuck Rock*. But where Core game's had fast action, arcade-quality scrolling, huge well-animated sprites and real humour, Titus' effort has an almost sedate pace, flick scrolling, small jerky sprites and emetic 'cuteness'. For a game that looks relatively simple to program, the actions pretty sluggish, especially on the ST, and the leaping over obstacles aspect (a vital part of any platform game) requires too much fiddly pixel-perfect positioning.

If *Prehistorik* had come out about six months ago it may have fared better. Sorry Grawagars, Chuck Rock's got their first - and funnier.

● **David Upchurch**

### GOIN' CLUBBIN'

**CLOCK - Increases the time counter (surprise, surprise).**

**BOMB - Knocks out everything on the screen, allowing Grawagars to have a mega nosh up.**

**SHIELD - Forms a magic invulnerability shield around our hero, but only for a short while.**

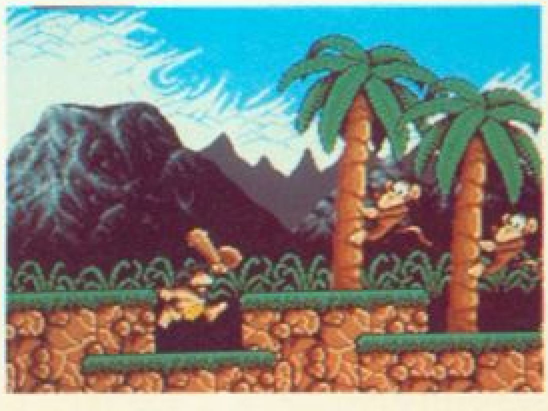
**AXE - Dazes the would-be main courses with one fell swoop.**

**SPRING - Puts a bounce in Grawagars step, allowing him to leap tall buildings in a single bound (well, it would if buildings existed back then).**

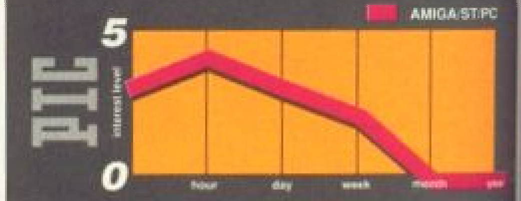
**CROSS - To you, sir, an extra life.**

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**Games based around the antideluvian antics of our anthropoid ancestors seem to be all the rage these days. Electronic Arts recently re-released the whacky *Caveman Ugh-lympics* on budget, Core Design unveiled their hilarious *Chuck Rock*, Data East's two-player romp *Joe & Mac* is gearing up for release on the Super Famicom while the bizarre cross-genre cutey *Caveman Ninja* is raking it in at the arcades (and is currently being converted to home formats by Elite). Now Titus join the 'club' (groan - again).**

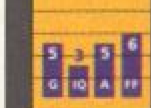


**The *Caveman Ninjas'* epic quest takes them across the sea on the backs of these giant sea serpents. This fantastic journey is coming to the home formats soon courtesy of Elite.**



**Not a bad looker, even if it doesn't play so hot. The challenge is substantial, but simple, repetitive and all too frequently frustrating. You're unlikely to be dusting this one off in a week let alone a month.**

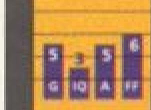
ACE RATING
**650**



### AMIGA

You want smooth horizontally scrolling action? Sorry, you'll not find it here. The flick scrolling on show would look ancient even to Grawagars. Likewise the sound is pretty poor, with a 'hilarious' gulping sound everytime a dino's downed being the only effect of note.

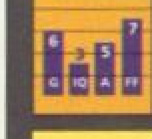
ACE RATING
**645**



### ATARI ST

Even the flick scrolling's sacrificed in the ST version, with each screen fading out and into the next. There's also an annoying tendency for the action to slow perceptibly whenever two or three are gathered on-screen.

ACE RATING
**680**



### IBM PC

*Prehistorik* fares better here than elsewhere, being faster and thus more enjoyable, and comes as a refreshing change to the dour sims and strategy shenanigans so predominant on PC. If you're after a platform game and find *Rick Dangerous 2* tough, you might get some fun out of this.

### RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AMIGA | £19.99 | OUT NOW |
| ATARI ST | £19.99 | OUT NOW |
| IBM PC | £19.99 | OUT NOW |

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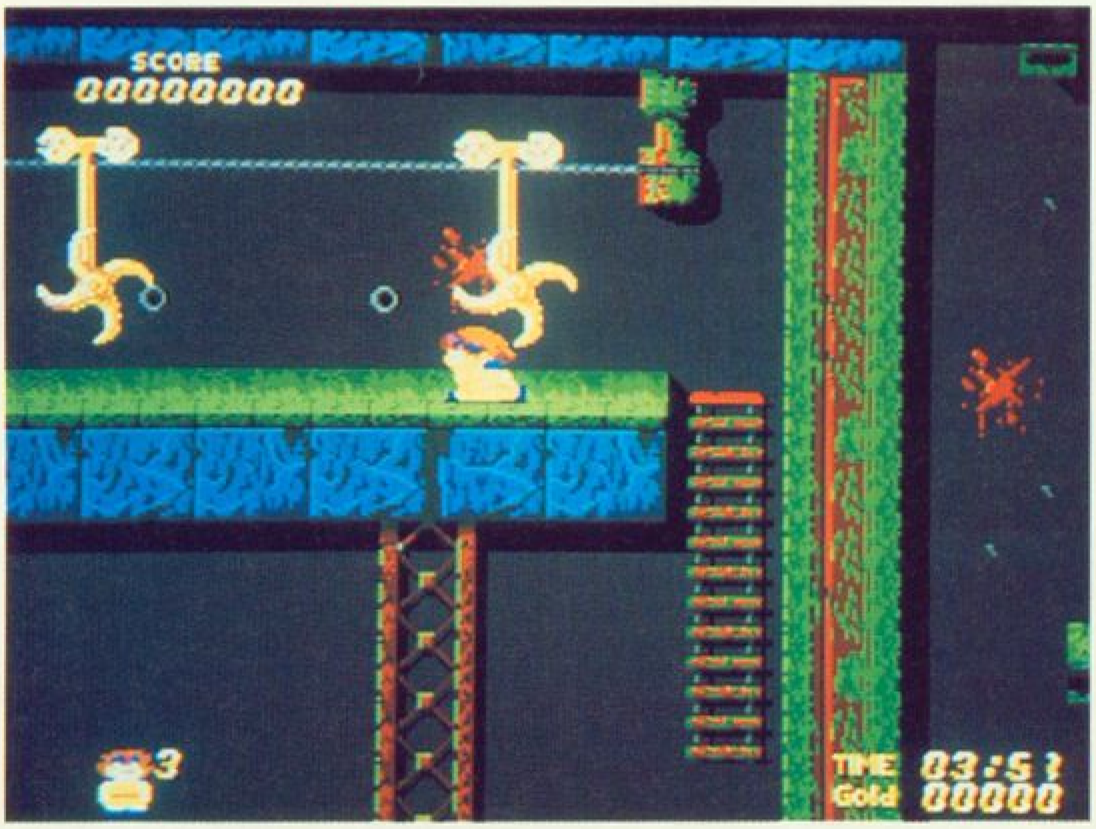
MINDSCAPE

# WARDNER SPECIAL

**Should CapCom be told? VISCO go battling ghosts 'n' ghouls...**



It had to happen sooner or later. For some time now, Megadrive owners have been able to enjoy Master System games on their machines via the Powerbase Converter. Trouble is, the Converter costs thirty quid. Now Visco have cut out the middle man by writing a Master System game that plugs straight into the Megadrive and dispenses with the Converter altogether!

Well, not quite. *Wardner Special* (though I was hard pushed to see what was so 'special' about it) has the dubious distinction of looking like a game written for the Megadrive's 8-bit little brother. Admittedly it looks like a very good Master System game, but this still doesn't really compensate.

It's equally un-gobsmacking scenario-wise. It's basically a platform game in the *Wonderboy* mould. You have to guide the child hero though level after level of monster-infested platforms, jumping over lava pits, climbing ropes, ducking beneath swinging blades and avoiding all manner of perils. Luckily the boy is armed with a magic fireball with which he can protect himself. Slain baddies leave behind treasure which can be used to buy magical power-ups in the shop just past the end-of-level baddy.

# KA.GE.KI

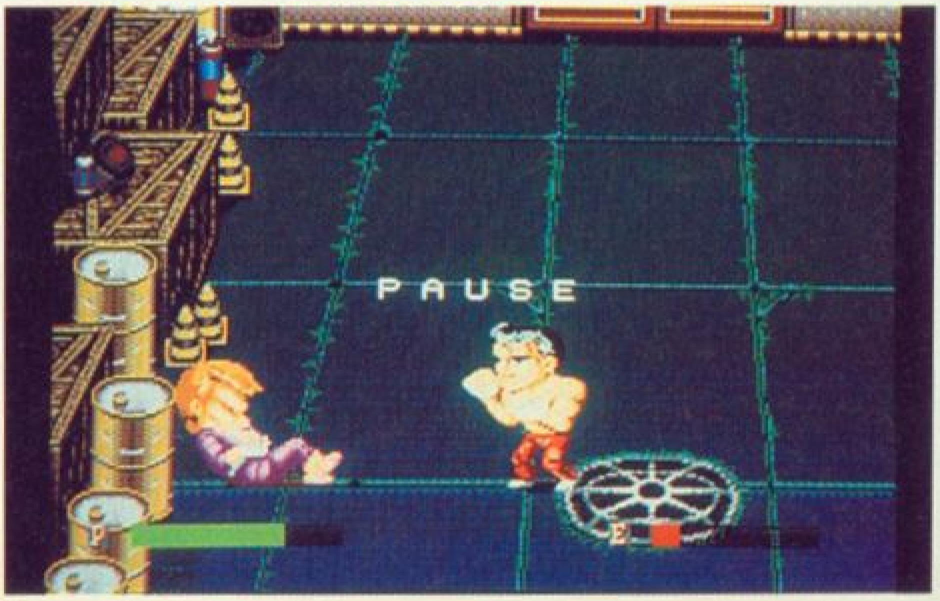
**Megadrive games get weirder and weirder. How about a beat-'em-up starring little men with big heads slugging it out in a multi-storey tower block? Sound interesting? Oh, how wrong you are!**

The days of the lone programmer hacking away in his bedroom are, it's sad to say, long over. Games seem to be designed and programmed more by committee than individuals nowadays. And while some would argue that this dilutes the 'creative' process and stifles originality, it at least means that the chances of a game being a real duffer are small. So when a turkey does turn up, it has the same obscene fascination as a road accident. *Ka•ge•ki* is a case in point. It stinks so much you can smell it, but you have to carry on playing, just to see how bad things get.

*Ka•ge•ki* - and no, I don't know what it means either (though I know what it ought to mean) - puts the player in control of a diminutive pugilist. Years of body building have obviously taken serious toll on our hero, such that he now looks like a Thunderbirds puppet on steroids.

The action all takes place in a multistorey apartment block and it's your task to guide the merry mutant to the top floor (he probably left his high-protein egg drink up there, or something). This would be difficult enough, what with the stench of urine from the out-of-order lift, but the task is made even harder by the baddies who reside on each floor. The hero must deck each denizen before he can progress.

As you've probably guessed by now, the game takes the form of a series of beat-'em-up bouts. You're bound to be impressed by the range of combat moves on offer: the player can punch,



CRACK! The fir baddy tumbles to the ground nursing a bruised noggin.

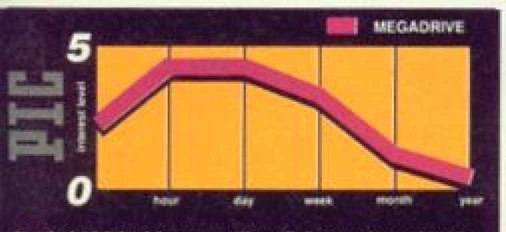
**TRUNK CALL**

*Wardner Special* is the software equivalent of the Elephant Man: all 'orrible on the outside, all luverly on the inside. Once you've recovered from the shock of seeing 8-bit graphics on a 16-bit console (and reading a game scenario that's been re-used more times than a tea bag in a greasy-spoon café), it comes as a pleasant surprise to discover that there's actually a half-decent game in there.

In fact, there's very little to criticise on the gameplay front. Control is responsive, there's a wide variety of game skills to master, the problems assaulting our hero are interesting and the difficulty is well graded. The only major fault is that age-old problem of the game moving you a little too far back when you die (which can be very frustrating when you've almost got past a tricky section). That niggle aside, this is pretty good fun overall...

If you're a platform games fan after a new challenge, you don't mind the poor graphics and you've already got the far superior *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, then you could do far worse than buy this. Give it a try.

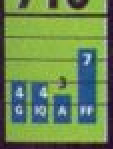
● **David Upchurch**



Once the initial shock has worn off you'll discover that a playable platform romp lurks beneath the hideous surface.

ACE RATING

**710**

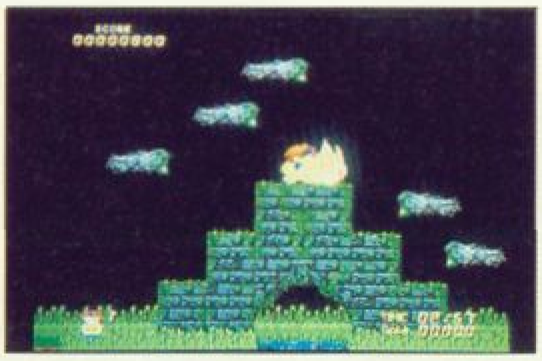


MEGADRIVE

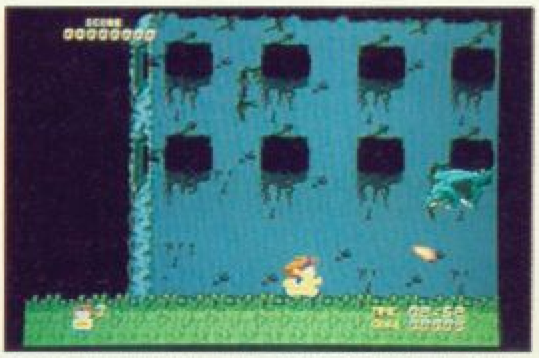
It's only the parallax scrolling that makes you suspect that this isn't a Master System game. Sound, so often the forgotten aspect of games, should, in this case, be forgotten. It thus comes as a real surprise to find that the game is actually quite good fun...

RELEASE DETAILS

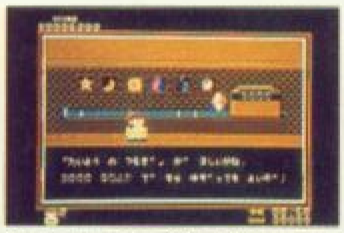
MEGADRIVE £39.99 OUT NOW

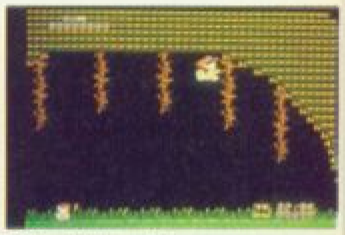


A close call as the boy hero lobs a fireball to see off one of the circling wraiths just in the nick of time.



The end-of-level baddies may not be particularly impressive in size but they pack a punch just as lethal as their larger counterparts in other games.





(Main picture far left) Aaaiiieeeee! These whirling blades will turn you into so much sliced salami if you don't duck.

(Above left ) Television shopping at its best. By walking along the counter the price of the power-up above the hero's head appears in the window below. Just hit fire to buy.

(Above right) Our hero dons leopard-skin leotard for these Tarzan-like leaps from vine to vine.

## BONANZA BOO-BOO

**Some of you may have found last month's review of *Bonanza Brothers* on the Megadrive a little... um... lacking. Especially in respect to the ACE Rating. There... er... wasn't one. Whooops! Never mind, just cut out the mark below and paste over the top of the rating box. Voilà - one complete review. Rest assured that the person responsible has been fed powdered glass and even as I write is suffering a slow and painful death.**

**750**

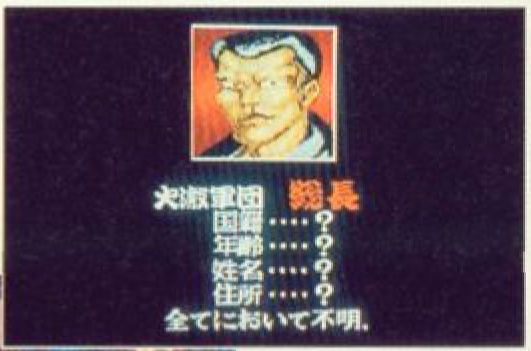
jab, jump and... er... that's it. As the two combatants slug it out, the screen scrolls to display the full combat arena. As you work you way up the building the nasties get progressively nastier, with the later ones wielding weapons such as chains and coshes.

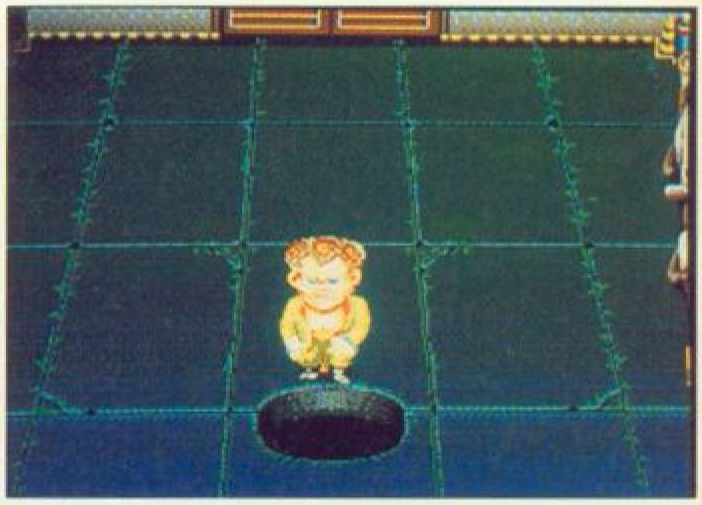
There's so much wrong with *Ka•ge•ki* it's difficult to know where to begin. To start with the graphics are just plain ugly, with ill-defined sprites hobbling around dull backgrounds. Sound is competent, and the digitised Japanese speech raises the odd unintended chuckle.

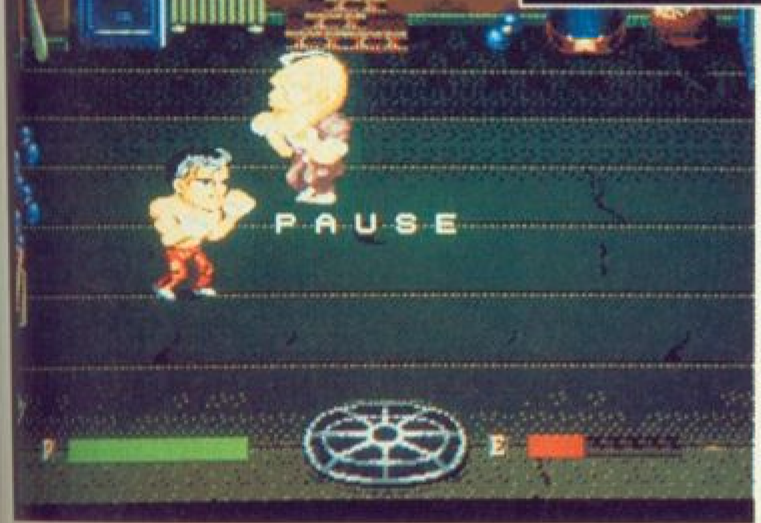
The poor aesthetics would have been bearable if the game had been any good (*Wardner Special* is proof of this), but it isn't. The limited repertoire of moves means that no gaming skill's involved at all: success is simply a matter of hammering away at the 'punch' button and occasionally avoiding the odd counter-strike. The baddies don't seem to get much tougher as you progress, and you'll find yourself halfway to the roof on your second or third try.

Enough! Take it away! I can stand no more.

● **David Upchurch**



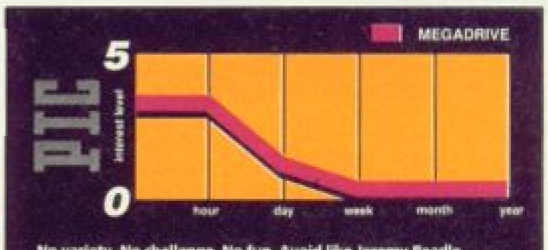




(Above) Your scorecard. Not very impressive yet, but it won't be long before you've a string of conquests to your name.

(Above right) Knock out your opponent and this guy trots on, picks up the downed baddy and throws him down this sewer shaft. Why couldn't he have helped out earlier?

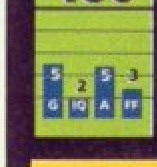
(Left) This Mohican-ed thug is fast on his feet and with his fists. Nip in and strike then duck back again for best results.



No variety. No challenge. No fun. Avoid like Jeremy Beadle.

ACE RATING

**480**

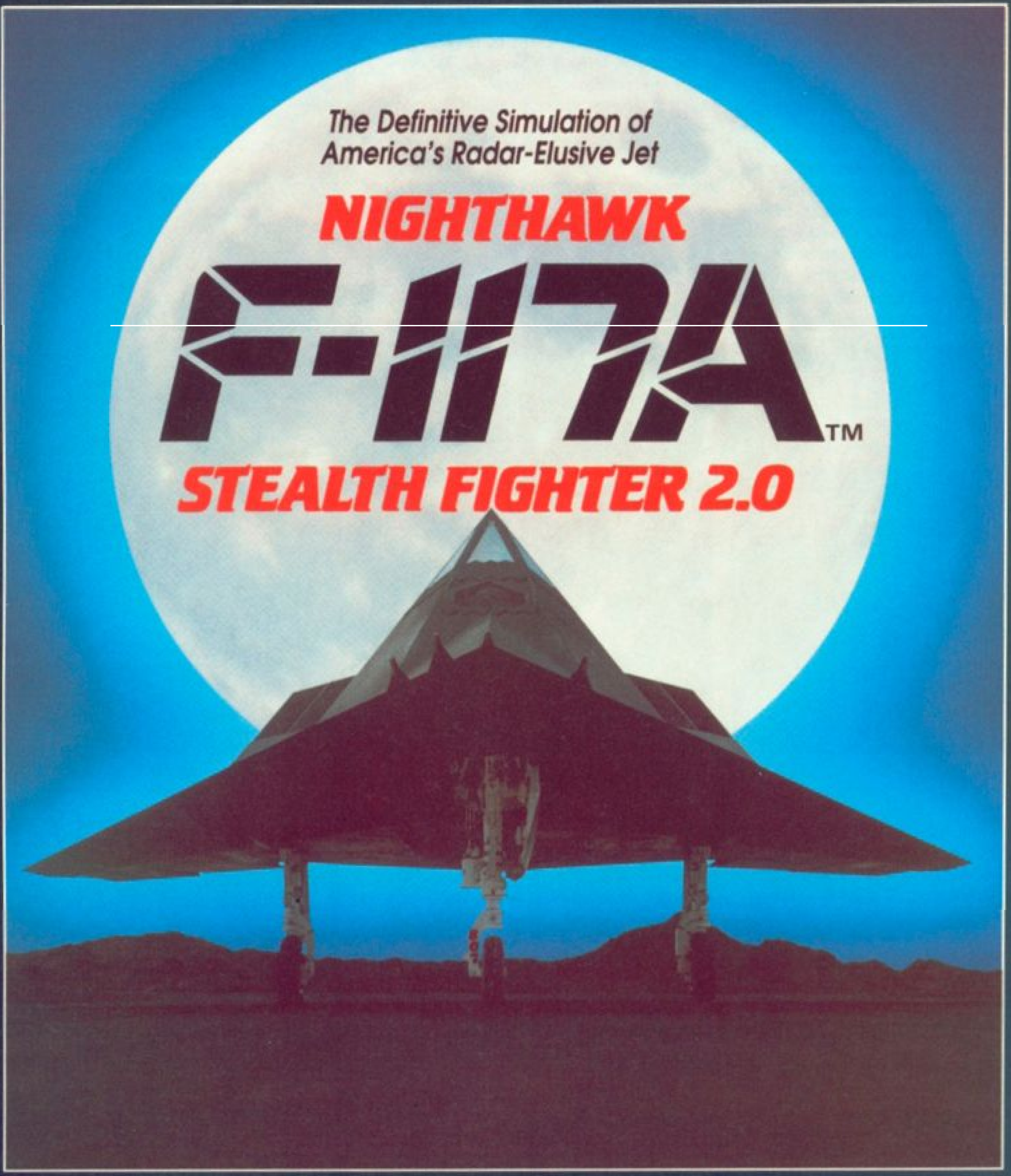


MEGADRIVE

You can almost hear the Megadrive groaning with the strain (more like embarrassment) of moving two ugly sprites around while an equally unattractive background scrolls by. The definition of dire.

RELEASE DETAILS

MEGADRIVE £39.99 OUT NOW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# Ghost BATTLE

## Spook! When things go bump in the night... it's probably THALION coming out with a new game.

Woo-oo-ooh! Look out behind you! In fact, that advice is useful in more ways than one if you're going to be playing *Ghost Battle*. Thalion obviously has no qualms about "borrowing" a rather hefty amount of elements from Ghosts'n'Goblins for use in this, its latest offering - it's nicked half the title for a start.

Anyone who's ever enjoyed so much as a passing familiarity with Capcom's coin-op classic will have no trouble identifying this as a rather unadulterated "tribute". You name it, it's got it - ghosts, zombies, floating things, ladders, moving-about-and-going-up-and-down platforms, graveyards, underground caverns... sound familiar? Not as much as the storyline does. You play the last hero of a beleaguered village who has understandably become a bit riled after an evil demon has snatched your girlfriend. Now you're off to the dastard's kingdom to get it sorted.

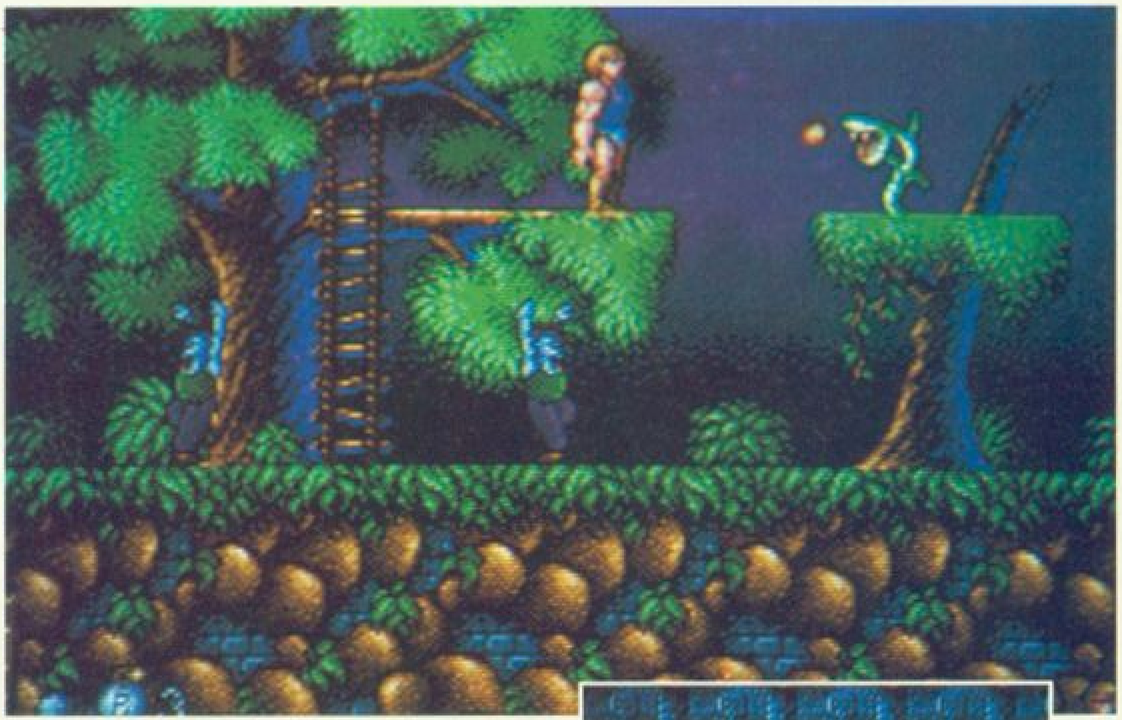
*Ghost Battle* is a level-based affair - battle and jump your way through the monster-infested landscape, pick up the extra weapons and defeat the boss baddy at the end of it. Like Goblins, a clock ticks down to prevent you from dithering about, and life comes in the form of a gold bar deteriorated by alien contact. As you'd expect, there are ways to come to an untimely end somewhat faster - jumping into water or pools of molten lava for a start.

To defend yourself against the undead hordes you have an unlimited supply of rocks, which can be thrown while standing, jumping and ducking to provide a greater target range. Unfortunately these primitive projectiles don't go far and don't do much damage - unlike the bombs, which pretty much annihilate anything near them when thrown. It's a shame you only get three to start off with really, because they're quite fun. Extra bombs and more powerful weapons are available, but you have to work hard to find them - they're normally revealed when a particularly tough opponent is offed.

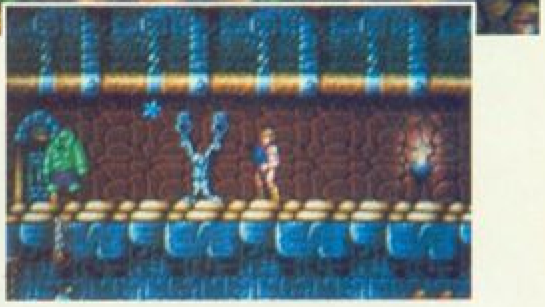
As the game progresses, it veers ever-so-slightly away from the arcade half of its genre name and more towards the adventure bit. Keys open doors (well I never), while special tools, if used correctly, can help to put pieces of machinery to useful effect. And that's about your lot, really. The problem seems not to be in the fact that Ghosts'n'Goblins has been so obviously copied (right down to individual nasties in fact, such as the venom-spitting plants), but that it's simply not been done very well. It's flat, sluggish and difficult for all the wrong reasons.

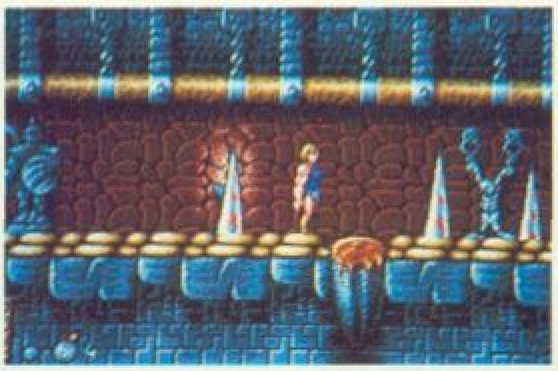
If you've got the patience of a saint and an unreasonable urge to own every platform game ever released, then by all means go out and buy it. But for anyone else, I get the feeling that after laying out £20 for this, ghosts won't be the only thing you'll be having nightmares about.

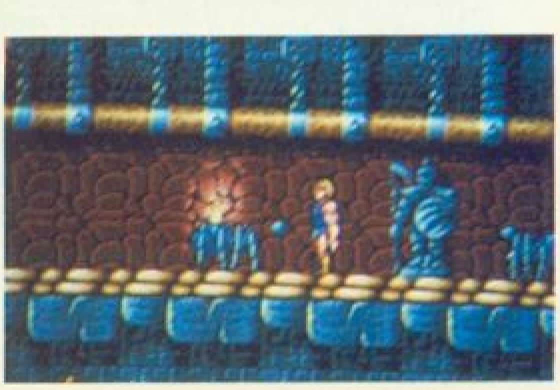
● **Gary Whitta**



**(Right)**
**GROINKS! Watch out for the venom spitted out by this mutant plant (as seen in a certain other platform game featuring ghosts and goblins).**



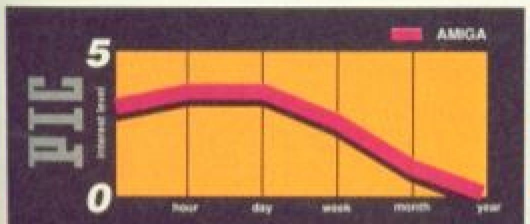




**(Above)These pointy spikes can cause problems in the nether regions if not successfully negotiated - problem is, you can only jump over them. You can't walk past, even when they're fully retracted. Weird, eh?**

**(Right Inset) FELCH! The first of the many bouncing bad guys, as seen in the underground regions of the first level. Kill him to get a key which opens a door a bit later on.**

**(Right)Surrounded by arachnids. These have to be killed while still at a distance, as your rocks are useless at close range. Otherwise, jump over them.**



**A sloppy and frustrating Ghosts'n'Goblins clone. With stuff like Gods and Chuck Rock out there, there's really no need to be wasting your valuable quids on this second-rate offering.**

ACE RATING
**520**

| G | IQ | A | FF |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 2 | 5 | 4 |

AMIGA

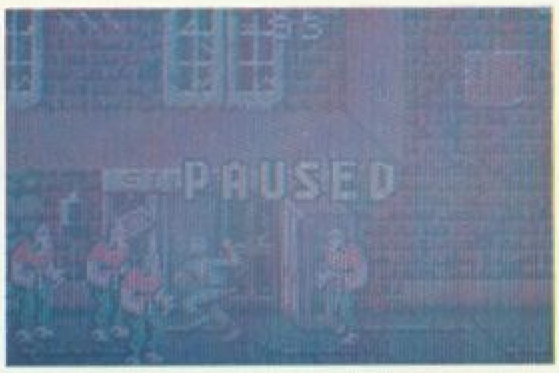
Amiga owners don't lay out hard cash for their machine to listen to ST sound - which is exactly what the *Ghost Battle* music track sounds like. On the plus side there are a couple of atmospheric stavs along the way. The sprites and backgrounds are the computer equivalent of fuzzy felt and a choice of three skill levels doesn't make the game any more fun to play.

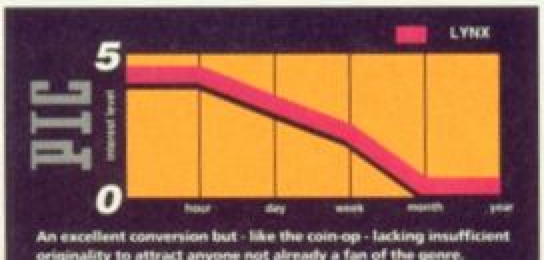
RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AMIGA | £19.99 | OUT NOW |
| ATARI ST | £19.99 | OUT NOW |

# NINJA

## HAI-YA! Can the World stan

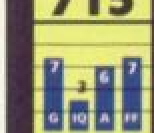




**An excellent conversion but - like the coin-op - lacking insufficient originality to attract anyone not already a fan of the genre.**

ACE RATING

**715**



LYNX

Smallish but well-animated sprites zip nimbly around detailed backgrounds to the accompaniment of suitably chop-socky sound. Arguably the best incarnation of *Shadow Warriors* yet seen on home systems.

RELEASE DETAILS

LYNX £29.99 OUT NOW

Hopes were raised when this first appeared in the office. Misreading the title as *Ninja Garden*, we envisioned a brutal beat-'em-up set in the herbaceous borders of some evil oriental gardening baron, who plans to flood the US fertiliser market with sub-standard peat. The hero's task would be to penetrate the overlord's garden shed hideout while fighting off rampaging hordes of henchmen wielding shears, hedge trimmers and seccateurs. But no such luck.

Oh, it's a beat-'em-up all right, but - surprise, surprise - it takes place in an urban setting. *Ninja Gaiden* will probably be more familiar to readers under the title of *Shadow Warriors* (converted onto the home formats from the Tecmo coin-op by Ocean about a year ago). The catsuit-clad hero must negotiate these mean streets, taking out the homicidal maniacs who besiege him from every direction, with the ultimate aim of finding and slaying a fellow Ninja possessed by a Demon.

In the game's favour the Ninja has some novel moves at his disposal, extra weapons and power-ups can be found inside the wreckage of smashed telephone booths and packing crates, and the bizarre bunch of foes range from masked thugs to log-wielding fatmen. But despite that, there's nothing here to shake you from the ennui-enduced lethargy of seeing yet another Ninja game.

**● David Upchurch**

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# WARBIRDS

## Chocks away! WW1 flying sims take off on the Lynx

Stunning is really the only way to describe *Warbirds*. It uses the Lynx's sprite manipulating hardware to create one of the most exciting - if not the most authentic - WW1 flight games yet seen. The player is plonked in the leather-lined cockpit of a rickety wire-and-wood WW1 crate with one simple aim - survive.

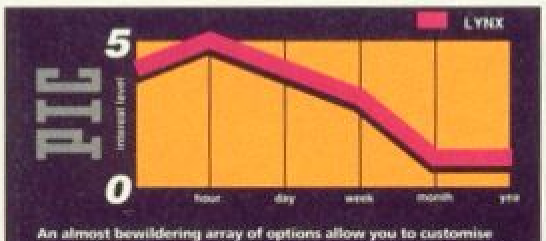
The action is depicted using rotating and shrinking/enlarging sprites. It's a similar technique to that used in Origin's *Wing Commander*... except you don't need a £1200 PC to run it. But *Warbirds* isn't all looks. It's highly playable and great fun.

The player can choose to fly any one of six missions, ranging from a head to head against a rookie to a life-or-death tussle with three aces. Apart from the odd take-off or landing the action centres exclusively around dogfighting. It's a pity there are no strafing or bombing scenarios to introduce a bit of variety, but you can't have everything I guess. An options screen allows you to further customise the game's difficulty.

Control couldn't be simpler. The joypad reproduces the traditional functions of the cockpit's joystick, while a tap of one of the control buttons fires off a round. The other control button in conjunction with the joypad allows you to swivel your 'head' and get various views from the cockpit. Speed can only be adjusted by climbing or diving or, more radically, by turning off the the engines with the Option button.

While sim fans may be unimpressed by the lack of complete control over the craft and the limited scenario range, most will be more than pleased with this superbly playable advert for the Lynx's capabilities.

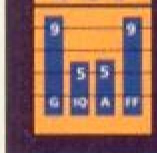
**● David Upchurch**



**An almost bewildering array of options allow you to customise the game to any degree of difficulty. The limited dogfight scenarios may become boring.**

ACE RATING

**836**

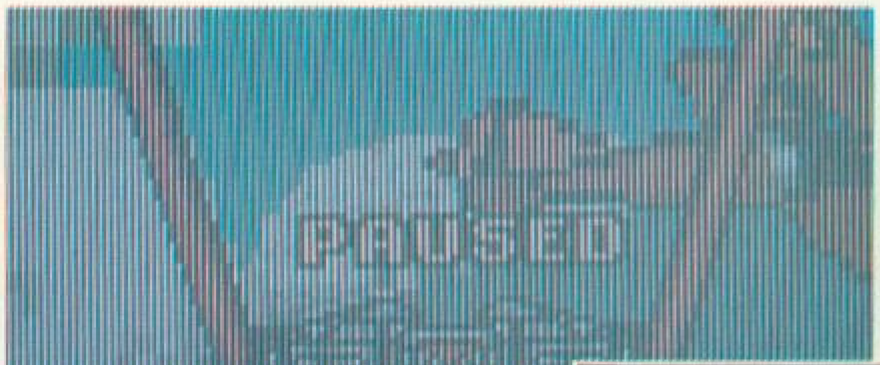


LYNX

Some superb *Wing Commander*-like graphics, exemplary presentation and - most importantly - superb playability make *Warbirds* one of the games you've got to have for the Lynx.

RELEASE DETAILS

LYNX £29.99 OUT NOW

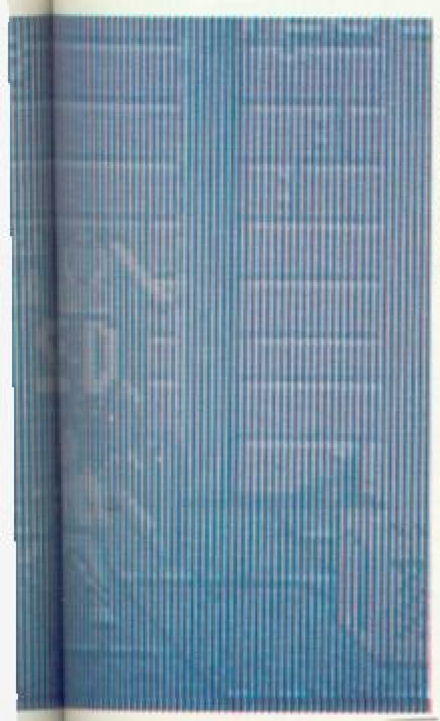


**Can you believe it? Some stunning sprite handling really shows off the Lynx's hardware. It all begs the question: How would Origin's *Wing Commander* convert to Atari's handheld?**

**Oooo dear! Not doing very well, are we? Perhaps it'd be best if you stuck to working in the corps canteen?**

# GAIDEN

## d another Ninja game...?



Giant sumo wrestlers, fat men carrying massive logs and thugs wearing ice-hockey masks. How weird can Ninja beat-'em-ups get? No doubt very weird, as the next inevitable entry in the genre will probably prove.

# PACLAND

## The Little Blob with the Big Appetite is back!

Kids today may have the likes of *Mario* and *Sonic* but there can few, ahem, 'mature' gamers who don't wipe away a tear of nostalgia when the memory of *Pac Man* forms in their mind's eye. Back in the early 80s you couldn't move for *Pac Man* related merchandise: T-shirts, records, cartoons, hold-alls, bedspreads - you name it, *Pac Man's* happy round face was on it.

But *Pac Man*'s hey-day was a long time ago, and little's been heard of the rotund rascal recently. No doubt *Pac Man*'s loyal fans are starting to get a little alarmed at his his long absence. Is their hero slumped in some backwater bar, staring at the bottom of a glass through alcohol-blurred eyes and relating heart-rending stories of lost fame to anyone unfortunate enough to be within range of his slurred voice?

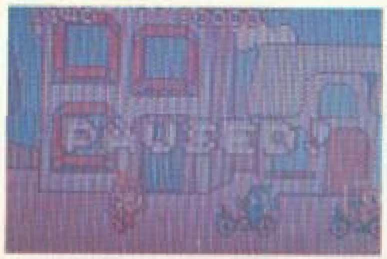
The happy answer is no. In the same way that many ageing rock stars keep their face in public by touring endlessly with a greatest hits tour, Pac Man returns with a new conversion of *Pacland*. *Pacland* was something of a new direction for Pac Man, and saw him moving away from his more familiar maze-like exploits.

His task here is to escort a tiny fairy though a ghost-filled sideways-scrolling landscape - the Pacland of the title. A single touch from the ethereal baddies is enough to send Pac Man to Pac Heaven, though the occasional Power Pills littering the landscape give our hero the chance to turn the tables.

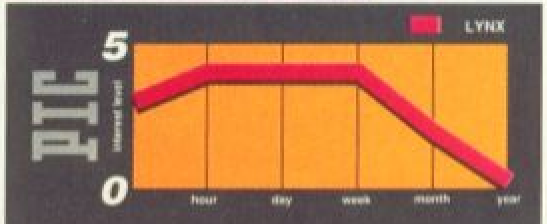
Pac Man's made the transition to the Lynx pretty well. The sprites, though tiny, are full of fun, the parallax scrolling's fine, and all the tunes and jungles you remember are there. The gameplay's a bit dated and perhaps a little too simple for modern tastes, but it's good to see everyone's favourite glutton back on the (very) small screen.

● **David Upchurch**

Using these springboards Pac Man can bounce himself high into the bonus-filled air and onto the distant island.



Big trouble in Little Pacland. The ghosts attack in all manner of guises - driving cars, riding pogo-sticks and flying biplanes.



**Another excellent conversion, and highly playable to boot.**

ACE RATING

**770**

| G | IQ | A | FF |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 8 |

LYNX

If the nostalgia is not enough to persuade you to get this, then the cute graphics and simple but enjoyable gameplay should.

RELEASE DETAILS

| LYNX | £29.99 | OUT NOW |
|---|---|---|

# A.P.B.

## Calling all cars! Coin-op conversion on the junction of Lynx and Handheld

Officer Bob's lot is not a happy one. The roads are packed with recidivists, the force is undermanned, and Bob's superiors are hard men to please. If Bob fails to meet a daily quota of arrests, then he'll literally get a roasting from his fiery-breathed Sergeant.

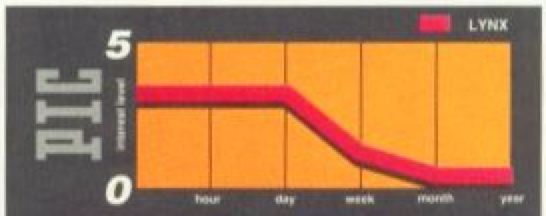
Each day's duty starts, à la Hill Street Blues, with roll call. As Officer Bob, you're told which suspects to look out for and the numbers to be arrested. From there it's out on the streets in the patrol car. The joypad is used to rotate the car, and the control button is used to accelerate.

As you patrol the streets, weaving in and out of the traffic, you'll eventually come across an offender, caught in the act of such heinous crimes as littering. These wrong-doers are arrested by simply turning on the siren and ramming the offender's vehicle. But try to arrest an innocent citizen's car by mistake and you'll be penalised with a demerit. Collect too many demerits or fail to meet the arrest quota and you'll lose a life.

*A.P.B.* is a classic example of a good conversion of a pretty uninteresting coin-op. The humourously-rendered scenario and cutesy graphics help to sustain interest, but patrolling the samey-looking streets soon becomes pretty tiresome and not a little dull. Fans of the coin-op will be more than happy with this, but others would be advised to try before they by.

● **David Upchurch**

Get used to this scrolling top-down view of the action - you'll be seeing a lot of it.



**As conversions go it's fine, it's just a shame that the original coin-op - apart from the amusing interludes - is so repetitively dull.**

ACE RATING

**700**

| G | IQ | A | FF |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 6 |

LYNX

Due to the Lynx's small screen and the need for recognisably large graphics, you can't see as much of the surrounding roads as in the original coin-op, which makes choosing routes and finding offenders something of a hit or miss affair. Okay, but there are better Lynx titles around.

RELEASE DETAILS

| LYNX | £29.99 | OUT NOW |
|---|---|---|

isk ... double disk ... double disk ... doub

# THE One for AMIGA GAMES

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LEVEL
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MOLECULE
METHANOL

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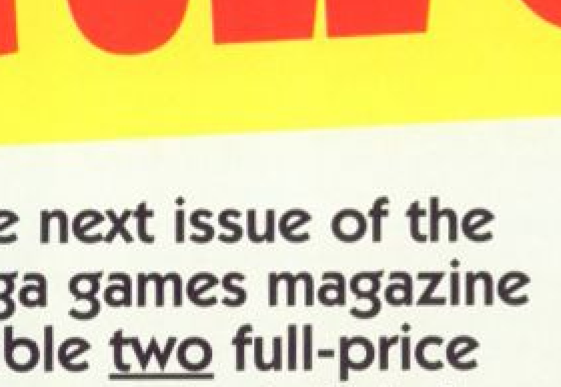

SCORE
900
HEALTH
1469
SCORE
600
HEALTH
1137

## PUFFY'S SAGA

Cute and colourful arcade action from Ubi Soft

## PLUS!

## WORK IN PROGRESS GOES WILD!

We peek behind the scenes at four of the hottest forthcoming games... Populous 2! RoboCop 3! Indiana Jones And The Fate Of Atlantis! Core's Thunderhawk!

**Keep ahead of the game with The One - next issue on sale June 26th**

# MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

## Can KRISALIS claim the *Kick Off* crown?

It's a very brave softco that launches a footy game onto the market in these post *Kick Off 2* days. Very brave... or very confident. And Krisalis probably have more reason to be confident than most: the original Manchester United was launched early last year and sold over one-hundred thousand copies. Will this sequel do as well?

*Manchester United Europe* lets you play for either the UEFA Cup, European Cup or the Cup Winner's Cup. Before each match, depending on your player manager bent, you can view each player's statistics and adjust your team's composition, formation and tactics accordingly. Even the most stats-phobic player should find this a fairly painless process due to the very user-friendly and highly polished presentation. However, you can skip all this and just get on with the game.

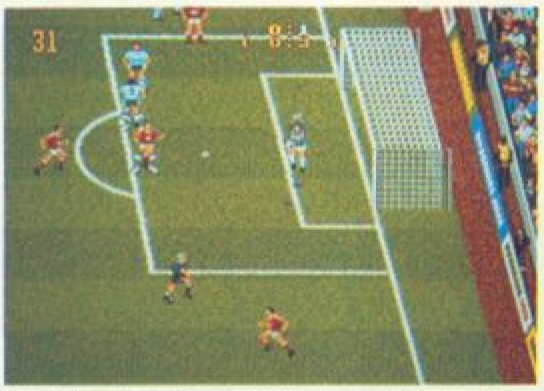
First impressions of the kick about itself are mixed. Graphically it's very good. The pitch is displayed in pseudo-3D, allowing for some decently-animated player action and graphic frills such as camera men on the goal-line and linesmen running along the sidelines. The only drawback is it takes a little while to judge where the ball is going to land when in the air. Only about one-eighth of the pitch can be seen - the screen scrolls to follow the ball. The action isn't lightning fast, and the scrolling isn't the smoothest you've ever seen, but once you get playing you don't really notice.

As is traditional the player nearest the ball is the one under your control. All the moves you'd expect having played *Kick Off 2* (there's those words again!) are here: tackles; sliding tackles, variable power shots; aftertouch. Total *déja vu* is avoided by the ability to chip the ball sideways while on the run and perform some one-touch wizardry, such as volleys, headers and sliding shots. All the shots are easily accessible from the joystick, and once mastered allow you to really show off with some slick moves.

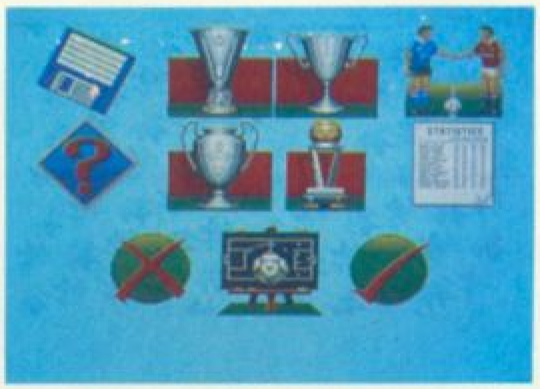
It has to be said that anyone expecting some sort of *Kick Off 3* is going to be disappointed - *Manchester United Europe* is a completely different ball game (ouch!). That's not to say it isn't fun to play - it most definitely is, and the game has a real feeling of personality and character thanks to the superb graphics. There's also more opportunity for tactical play thanks to the greater control over the ball.

Even if you already have the original, *Manchester United Europe* offers enough improvements to make it worth buying, both aesthetically and playability-wise. Add the fact that up to four players can take part at the same time (providing you have a suitable adaptor) and that those who want to concentrate on the player manager side can switch of the action games, and you have a very satisfying all-round package that any footy fan really can't go wrong with.

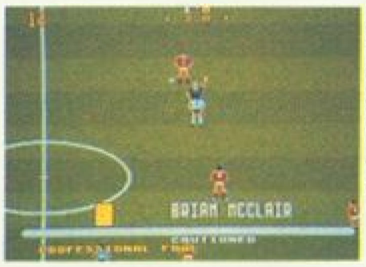
● **David Upchurch**



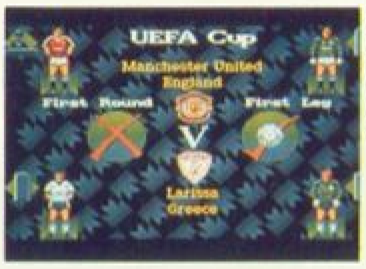
The goaly goes theough one of his many superbly-animated contortions in an attempt to stop the ball.



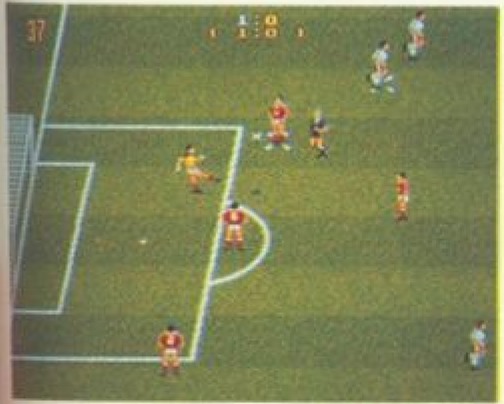
This is just one of the many comprehensive and well-designed option screens presented to the player after loading.



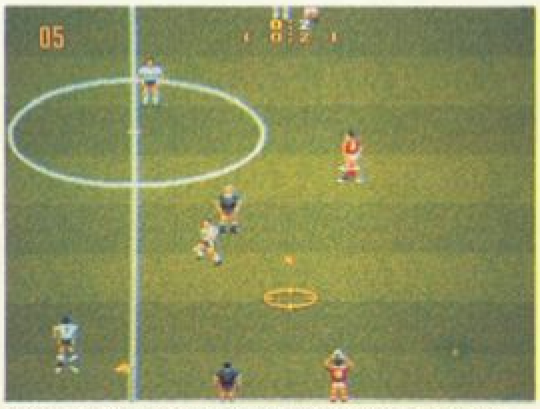
A groan of despair from the crowd as McClair gets the yellow card for a particularly dodgy tackle. Too many lessons from *Gazza's Soccer School*, by the looks of it.



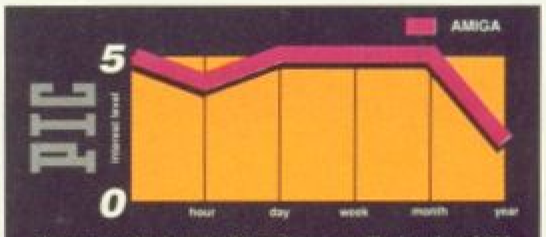
Just before the kick off there's a final check screen where you can make sure you've set the game up correctly.



Just eight minutes to go before the end of the game, and Napels are still no nearer to equalising. Following yet other vain attempt at a goal, the Man U goaly rockets the ball down to the far end of the pitch.



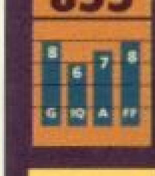
Throw-ins - like corners - bring a targeting system into play. The player moves the target around with the joystick then taps fire to lob the ball. The strength of the shot depends on how long the button is held down.



The presentation is super slick, and once any silly thoughts of *Kick Off 3* are dispelled you'll find this a playable and absorbing soccer sim.

ACE RATING

**855**



AMIGA

Whereas *Kick Off 2* was footy for the shoot-'em-up fan, *MU Europe* is more for the simulationist. While some may find the action a little too slowly paced, this does allow more complex tactical plays to be set up. The player manager element is the very tasty icing on the cake.

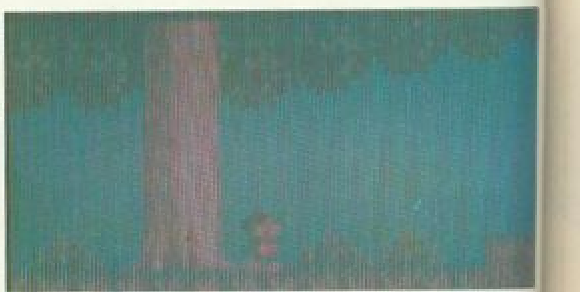
RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AMIGA | £25.99 | OUT NOW |
| ATARI ST | £25.99 | OUT NOW |
| IBM PC | £29.99 | TBA |

**Is the Game Gear really the future in the palm of your hand? The software will decide, so here ACE has a shufty at a quartet of the first titles to filter through from abroad...**

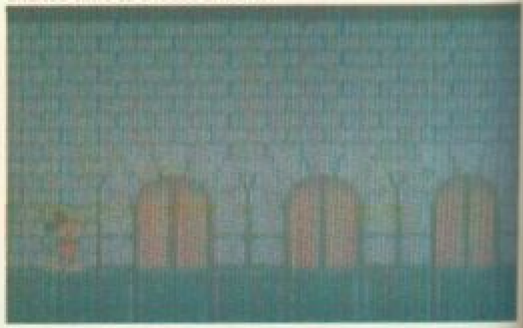
# CASTLE OF ILLUSION

## Starring Mickey Mouse



Mickey at the outset of his quest. What's surprising is that given the teeny size of the screen and the low graphical resolution, Mickey actually looks like Mickey.

Before the quest begins, Mickey must decide which level he'll tackle first. When a level is completed, the door turns to stone and it's time to choose another.

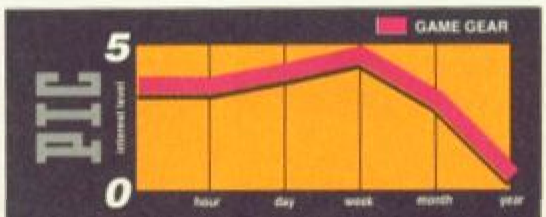


It has to be said that in *Castle of Illusion*, things don't get off to a particularly good start. After reading the scenario, you somehow don't expect to find Documentation by Thomas Harris at the back of the manual. It goes like this: it's a lovely day in Vera City, and Mickey and Minnie are enjoying a lovely walk in the meadow when the evil Mizrabel, an old witch who is jealous of Minnie's beauty, reaches down from the sky and snatches her away. Now poor old Mickey must go and get her back.

Anyway, that's all just a rather long-winded excuse for what is basically an unadulterated *Mario* clone - and not a bad one at that. Mizrabel's domain consists of five levels, and Mickey must search each of them to find seven Rainbow Gems. In fact the more you think about it, the more *Mario* it is - jumping from platform to platform, picking up and throwing blocks, sliding slopes, ladders... you name it.

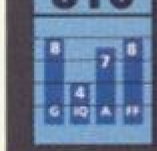
There are some original touches, such as the Toyland level, which scrolls from right to left (disorientating but challenging) and graphically it's all very pretty. The minus point is that Mickey Mouse is a bit wet whichever way you look at him - maybe this is an effort to have him regain some of the popularity that he's been losing to Mario over the years. Nevertheless, it comes with a wholehearted recommendation.

● Gary Whitta



A superior quality *Mario* clone marred only slightly by the naffness of the central character and questionable longevity. Ideal long-train-ride killer.

ACE RATING
**810**



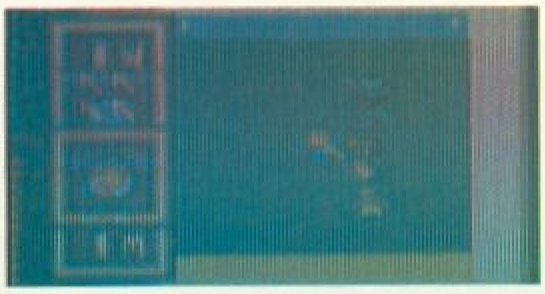
GAME GEAR

Looks and sounds very pretty - just the sort of thing Game Gear owners want to make them feel they've made the right move laying out that hefty hundred pounds. Plays well too.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAME GEAR £29.99 OUT NOW (Import only)

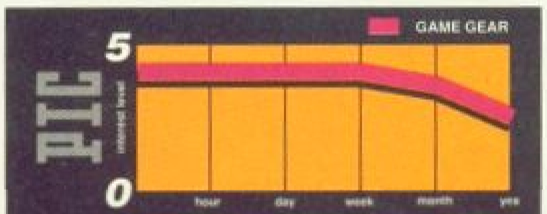
# SUPER GOLF



You can't beat a whack a bit of computer golf to while away the hours - and though this handheld interpretation may not be able to boast the sophistication of something like *PGA Tour Golf*, it's still a right old laugh. The Sega boys have adopted the familiar birds-eye view that's been the favourite with coin-op golf games for eons, and even though we've seen it all before, it actually works quite well. Simplicity is of the essence, and though there's a fair bit of messing about to do before you actually get to hit the ball each time, there's nothing too taxing - wind, for example, is very simple and not too obtrusive.

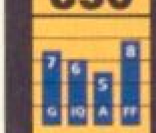
Shots are played thus - choose your club and where you want the club to strike the ball (for hook and slice shots), place the direction of the shot, select the power and you're off. What's surprising considering the comparatively small scale of the game is that there's still plenty to think about and a fair bit of skill required (putting requires particular concentration) - and the holes aren't little pitch'n'putt numbers either. The flyby preview of each one shows that they've got genuine scale to them, and some of the longer Par 5s are real epics. In addition, there are a few nice options to keep the gameplay varied - one to four players, choice of characters and caddies and types of game, stroke, matchplay and practice. Good stuff, and not one to lose its appeal after the first couple of rounds.

● Gary Whitta



It's right smart treat dreamy homestyle is *Super Golf*. Another great one to play on the move, as it allows you to dip in and play as little or as much as you like.

ACE RATING
**830**

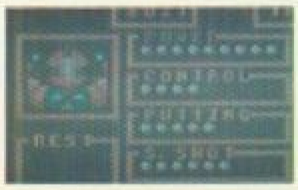


GAME GEAR

Very pretty, although somewhat basic graphically, and there's plenty of jolly music to keep your spirits up, even when you're on a double bogey.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAME GEAR £29.99 OUT NOW (Import only)



Before play, an interesting RPG-style feature allows you to 'make' your own player by dividing skill points between a selection of attributes. A nice touch.

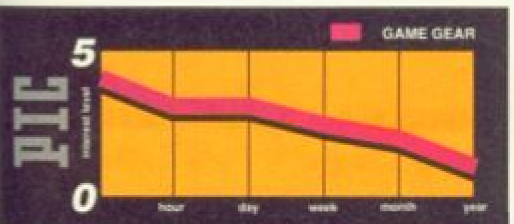
# THE GG SHINOBI

Considering that Sega's last ninja outing *Shadow Dancer* featured the rather dubious gameplay twist of the hero being helped out by a kung-fu dog, this new *Shinobi* adventure was greeted with horror when the words 'The GG' were discovered as part of the title. Could it be that this time out the famous shadow warrior has a horsey companion? Does he smack the enemies with his nosebag and use high-pitched whinnying to knock them into submission?

Thankfully *The GG Shinobi* features no equestrian antics and the GG bit must, for the moment, remain unexplained. So, what we have is a scrolling four-level beat-em-up where old Shin must kick his way through four levels of mayhem - Highway, Valley, Woodland and Harbor - in order to rescue his kidnapped buddies. The action is divided into two distinct styles - kicking in baddies and jumping platforms across a horizontally-scrolling landscape, and kicking in baddies and jumping platforms across an eight-way scrolling landscape. Suffice to say that the action isn't that varied - and it isn't that easy either, since Shinobi's rather limited powers make him a sitting duck for some of his more powerful enemies. Essential stuff, of course, for *Shinobi* fans and those with a very high tolerance level, but anyone else would be best advised to leave well alone.

►RED
忍術×0
SCORE 400
PLAYERS 0

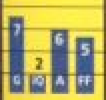
**● Gary Whitta**



**Ho hum. A rather uninspired addition to the *Shinobi* genre that is nevertheless essential stuff for anyone craving for some hand-held martial arts action - at least until something better comes along.**

ACE RATING

**700**

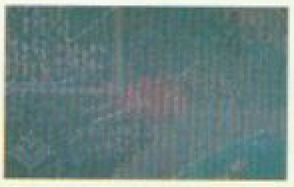


GAME GEAR

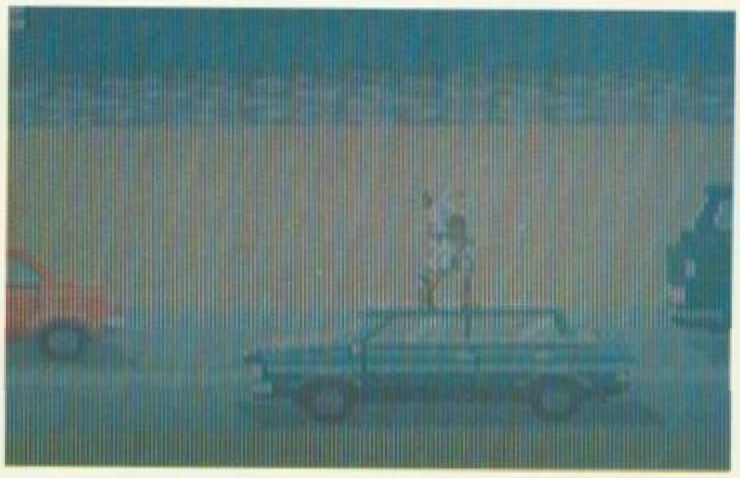
Some pretty and colourful graphics and a jolly soundtrack do their best to spice up the proceedings, but it's a losing battle. There's a nice opening sequence, and anyone who bought their Game Gear solely for the purpose of impressing their mates won't be disappointed. Those who crave more rewarding experiences are going to feel cheated.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAME GEAR £29.99 OUT NOW (Import only)



**The designers have been thoughtful enough to let you select to play any of the four levels at the start.**



**Oi! Mind the paintwork! Jumping from car bonnet to car bonnet in the first level of *GG Shinobi* - a gameplay idea strangely reminiscent of Taito's coin-op flop *Crime City*. Surely just coincidence, eh Sega?**

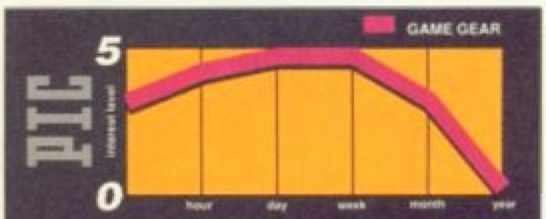
This is somewhat of an oddity - a 'deep' game on a handheld. The RPG/exploration theme of *Dragon Crystal* may seem inappropriate for a machine like the Game Gear, but sensibly the designers have decided to play up the action aspect and keep the FRP stuff as simple as possible - if you sustain damage, you wear a Heal Ring to get it back, and so on.

# DRAGON CRYSTAL

The plot is about as basic as it gets. While out riding your bike one day, you ride down a mysterious alleyway you've never seen before and when you come out, you're in a dungeons'n'dragons fantasy world. You don't know how you got there, but you have to escape - and fast. The world is viewed from above and scrolls in four directions as you hack your way through the trees and flowers trying to find the warpzone that leads to the next level. Throughout the proceedings, a mysterious egg follows you about - reach a certain level and the egg hatches into a friendly dragon who helps you out in combat - a nice touch. Combat between two and the various denizens is, as you'd expect, conducted on a hit-point basis with armour classes and skill points counting more than how you actually perform. Spells and objects abound, waiting to be collected and used - although many items don't reveal their properties until you actually use them to find out.

And that's about your lot. It's all very jolly stuff, but it's difficult to see exactly who it appeals to. It's not deep enough to get a real FRPer interested, and the average Game Gear user is likely to get a mite miffed if he comes to his stop on the tube just as he is in the middle of his epic adventure. However, if you happen to fancy something a little different and are willing to set aside the time for some long playing sessions, you could be on a winner here.

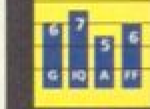
**For the first few levels at least, get used to this rather useless egg following you about. Only later does it hatch into a helpful dragon.**



**Interesting stuff indeed and likely to keep you at it for a good month - but like all RPGs, it's going to lose its appeal in a big way once you've clocked it. What else is there to do?**

ACE RATING

**750**



GAME GEAR

Since gameplay is the all-important - and memory-intensive - factor here, the graphics are functional but not eye-boggling. The same goes for the sound, which has an appropriately swords'n'sorcery theme but fails to stimulate the eardrums into apoplectic frenzy. But don't forget that it's gameplay that's all important and on that score it gets a big thumbs-up.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAME GEAR £29.99 OUT NOW (Import only)

**● Gary Whitta**

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**The EUROPEAN COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT SHOW**
1991

Hollywood has some funny ideas about sport. If *Field Of Dreams* is to be believed, baseball is some sort of balm for the injured American psyche. Whether this computerised incarnation of the Great American Sport will make you want to go out into the garden and start building a baseball park in your dad's begonias is another matter.

One or two players can take part, each donning the colours of one of the thirteen different teams on offer. Before the game players can adjust the team make-up and change the playing order. If you want you can grab a 'dog and a rootbeer and sit and watch the computer play itself.

Most will be familiar with the principles of baseball from the very similar rounders. The action starts with a close-up view of the pitcher and the batter. Using the joypad, the pitching player can adjust where the ball is thrown. Likewise, the batting player has to try and match the ball's position and hitting fire at the right time to strike the ball.

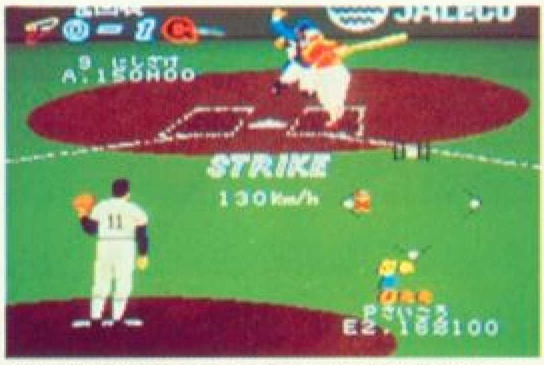
Whoooaaaaaah! What a hit! As the ball soars into the air, the view cuts to a scrolling semi-3D view of the field. In the top-right corner there's a tiny plan view of the whole park. Markers indicate where the ball will land and the nearest catcher, who can be moved to try and intercept the ball. Once retrieved, the ball can be thrown to either of the four bases by simply moving the joypad and pressing fire. Meanwhile, the batting player has to decide whether it's worth the risk of being caught 'out' by moving his players round the bases.

*Super Professional Baseball* disappoints in a lot of ways. The graphics can really only be described as adequate. The players look a bit 'chunky' and badly drawn, and the pathetic crowd graphics are laughable. Sure, Jaleco have used the machine's ability to rotate and shrink the pitch but here it really is just a gimmick, unlike *F-Zero* where's it's an integral part of the game. Sound, too, fails to impress. There are some digitised calls and all the crowd roars you'd expect, but nothing that really stretches the Famicom's sound chip.

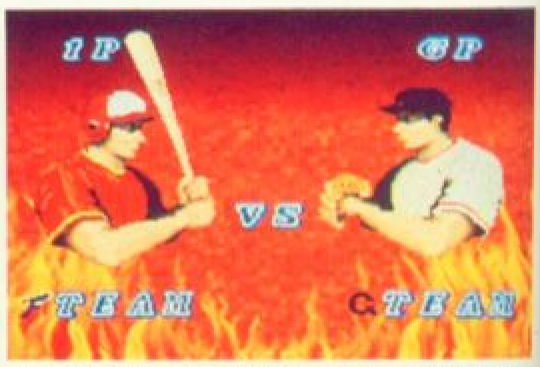
Aesthetically, then, *Baseball* strikes out. But what's this, riding over the brow of the hill like the cavalry to save the day? Why, it's the enjoyable gameplay. Even though the instructions on this imported cartridge are in Japanese it doesn't take long to figure out how to control everything. The cyclic nature of the pitch-strike-run action couldn't be called pulse racing, but it's still enjoyable - almost relaxing, in fact.

Although *Baseball*'s simplicity means that it won't really stretch your gaming skills (with the associated risk that you may become bored after a while), you should find this an enjoyable slice of Saturday afternoon American fun.

● **David Upchurch**



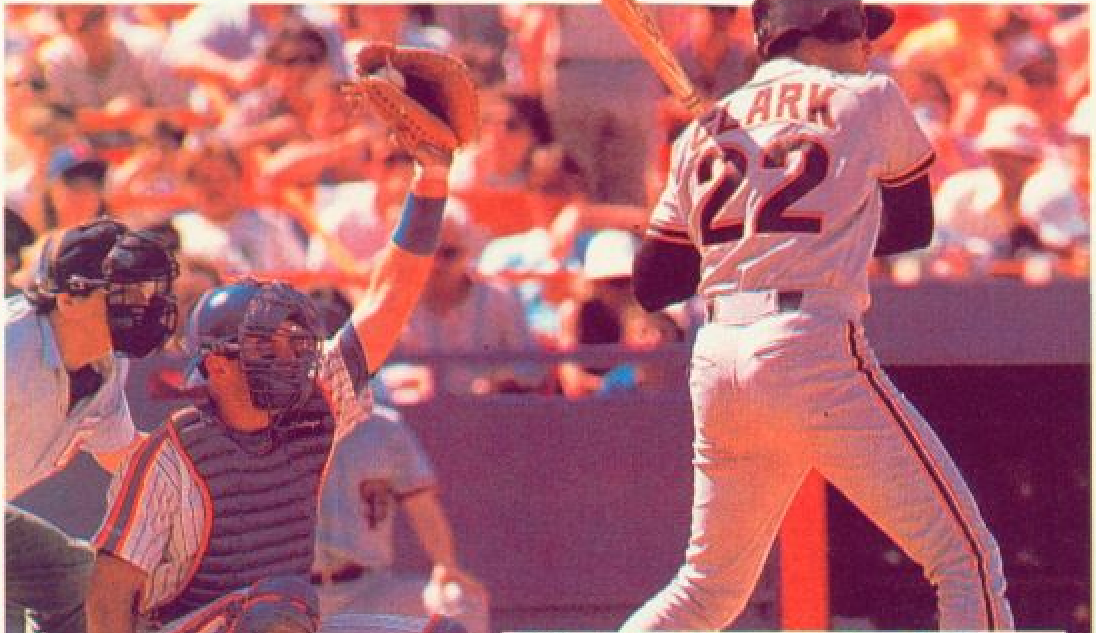
YOU'RE OUT! If the batsman misses or fouls the ball three times then he has to make the long slow walk back to the dug out, his head bowed in shame. Of course with the ACE team's supreme playing skills this very rarely happens.



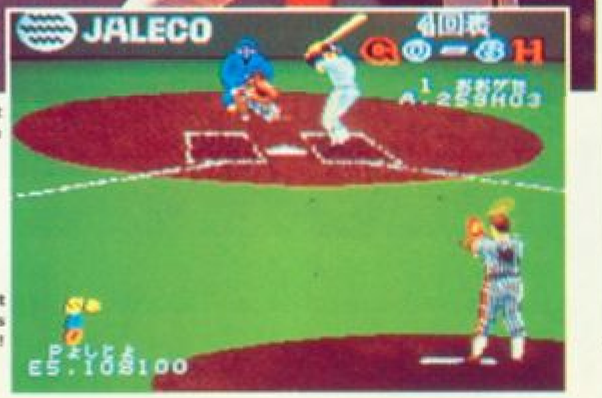
The baseball players from Hell! Before each game there's this shot of players from the two players facing off over a backdrop of lava and flames. Just what are Jaleco trying to say about the noble art of baseball?

# SUPER PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

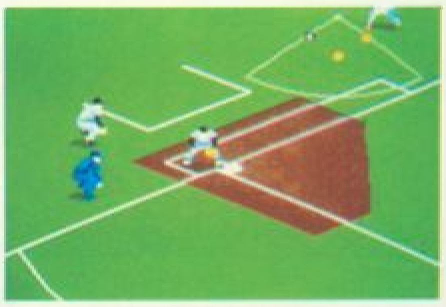
## Is JALECO's baseball sim a Field of Dreams or a Scrapyard of Nightmares?

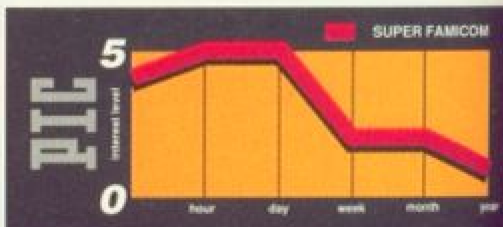


No, this isn't a screenshot. Nifty as the Super Famicom is, it can't generate images quite as good as those above! If you really want to see the real thing, you'll have to book a flight to the States.



The computer player prepares to pitch. It's a real pity that you can't simulate the faking and psyching-out that goes on in a real baseball game!

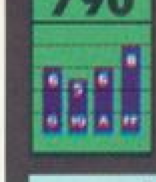




Compared to the likes of *F-Zero* or *Final Fight*, this doesn't astonish technically, but gameplay-wise it's fine. Although not overly challenging, the action is fun enough to keep you coming back time after time.

ACE RATING

**790**



SUPER FAMICOM

The graphics have a slightly rough-and-ready 'half finished' look to them, but they do their job. It's a real shame more wasn't made of the 'home run' celebration screens. The cheesy tunes provide a suitable ballpark atmosphere.

RELEASE DETAILS

SUPER FAMICOM £54.99 OUT NOW (Import)

# NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

## BASKET CASES

### ACE goes One-On-One with Jaleco's IN YOUR FACE and LJN's NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE

**Basketball has never really taken off in the UK. Too much like poofy old netball, I guess. Still, that doesn't prevent the sport being turned into a great computer game. Both *In Your Face* and *NBA All-Star Challenge* centre around One-On-One, a stripped down version of basketball played by two opponents in a half-court. As you'd expect, both games share a lot of similarities:**

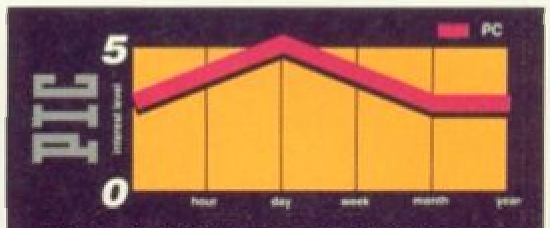
- **You can choose between either playing to score more points in a given time limit or to reach a set number of points first. (The time/score limits can be adjusted.)**
- **You can select players of differing skills.**
- **Your on-screen alter-ego is controlled with the joypad.**
- **When not in possession, the player can try and steal the ball or block shots with his body.**
- **When in possession, the player can dribble with the ball until in position to shoot. The ball is thrown by tapping 'fire' once to jump then again to release the ball. The higher the jump, the further the ball will travel - aiming for the basket is automatically taken care off.**
- **Two players can link up and play head-to-head.**

While lacking *IYF*'s Two-On-Two option, *Challenge* makes up for it with four sub-games: Free Throw Competition; H.O.R.S.E.; Accuracy Shoot-Out; and Tournament. Although they're all based around the same idea (shoot accurately from various positions around the court) they're good fun and make a welcome change from the regular game.

The One-On-One game is played on a static court which, while not as flashy as *IYF*'s scrolling court, at least makes it possible to see what's going on. There are more moves at the player's disposal than IYF, and while this makes *Challenge* harder to get into, it makes this a game you're more likely to come back to.

In addition there are three skill levels and 27 players to choose between, all based on real NBA players. Although no edge-of-the-seater actionwise, *Challenge* is a satisfying game that repays perseverance.

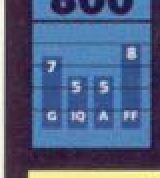
● **David Upchurch**



**It takes a little while to learn how to Slam-Dunk with the best of them, but then *Challenge*'s true qualities to shine through. You'll still be coming back to this when *In Your Face* is On The Shelf.**

ACE RATING

**800**

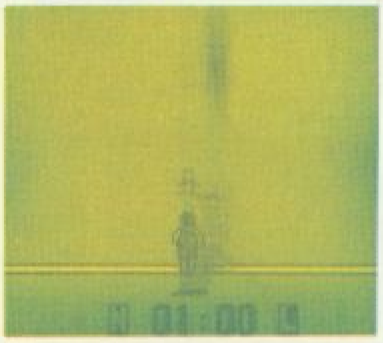


GAMEBOY

No fancy scrolling here - thank goodness! Clear uncluttered gameplay that puts the emphasis on playing skills rather than reaction tests makes this the superior basketball title.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £29.99 OUT NOW (Import)

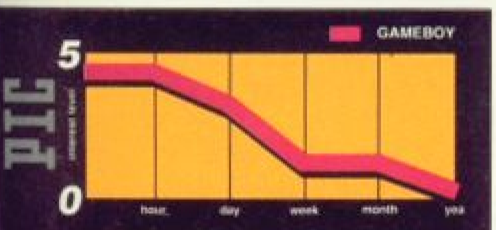


**No fancy scrolling here but at least you can clearly make out what's going on. This and the extra sub-games make *Challenge* the superior Gameboy basketball game.**

## SLAM-DUNK!

| | IN YOUR FACE | ALL-STAR CHALLENGE |
|---|---|---|
| **Two-player link up?** | **Yes** | **Yes** |
| **No. of skill levels?** | **1** | **3** |
| **No. of players?** | **4 (Fictional)** | **27 (All based on real NBA stars)** |
| **Games?** | **One-On-One<br>Two-On-Two** | **One-On-One<br>Free Throw Competition<br>H.O.R.S.E<br>Accuracy Shoot-Out<br>Tournament** |

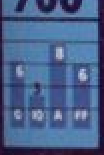
# IN YOUR FACE



**Some attractive presentation can't make up for simplistic gameplay and visually confusing display. Even the two-player link up can't pull this one out of the mire.**

ACE RATING

**700**



GAMEBOY

Fast action, but the Gameboy's blurry display makes it nigh-on impossible to see what's going on. Nice tunes, though.

RELEASE DETAILS

GAMEBOY £29.99 OUT NOW (*Import*)

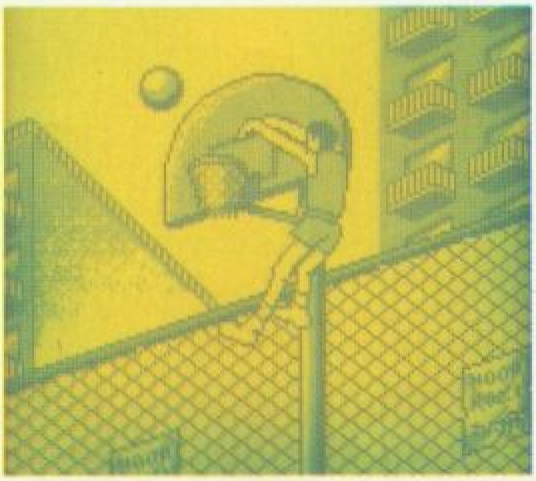
*In Your Face* boasts some superb presentation. For example, just after trying to 'Slam-Dunk' the ball into the basket, the shot is replayed as a series of animated close-up 'snap shots', complete with the sound of a camera shutter.

*IYF* has just the one skill level, and only four players to choose between. The gameplay is also fairly simplistic: the ball can be stolen from your opponent by simply running into them. While this makes the game easy to get into, it also means that you'll soon tire of it.

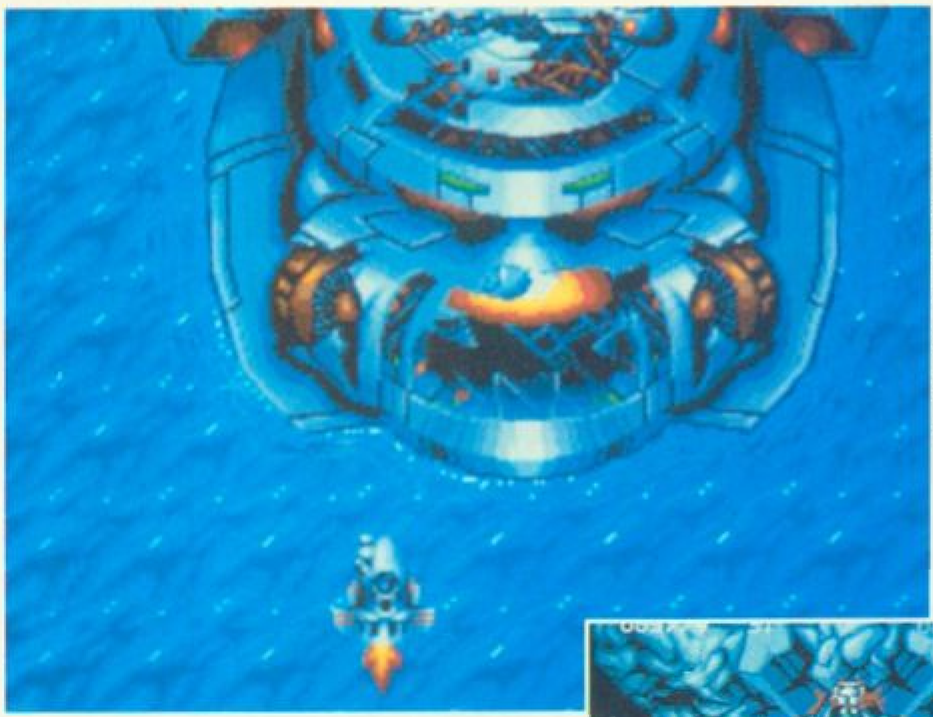
*IYF*'s biggest 'plus' point is the Two-On-Two option, where the game takes place between two teams of two. You control the player with the ball, and there's the ability to pass. While this adds some depth to the basic premise, it's still not enough to make *IYF* an essential buy.

But probably *IYF*'s biggest problem is the display. The action takes place in a court much larger than the screen, with the view scrolling to keep up with the action. This would be okay, but the scrolling speed is such that the blurring of the images is terrible (a notorious problem with the Gameboy). This would be acceptable if the blurring didn't obscure the action. Which it does.

● **David Upchurch**



**Attempt a Slam-Dunk and you get this close-up replay of the action, with fancy detailed graphics and large sprites leaping for the basket.**



The Mozone armada sets sail, with the intention stopping the pathetic Earthlings' plans of escaping to a new dimension. It's up to your puny one-man starship to save the day! The scrolling on this watery level is frighteningly fast!

Core Design obviously don't believe in sticking to a genre. They've pretty much cornered the market in platform games with the *Rick Dangerous* series, *Car-Vup* and the brilliant *Chuck Rock*, and they made an impressive entrance onto the RPG scene with *Corporation*. Now it seems their next intended area of domination is shoot-'em-ups. First came *Warzone*, which was arguably the best *Ikari Warriors* clone on 16-bits, and hot on its heels comes *Frenetic*.

*Frenetic*'s gameplay roots stretch all the way back to hits of the early 80s like *Moon Cresta* and *AstroBlaster*. The screen scrolls down vertically, while wave after wave of aliens swarm and attack. Power-ups can be collected by shooting certain creatures or weapons-carrying pods. And needless-to-say there's something very big and nasty at the end of each of the eight levels.

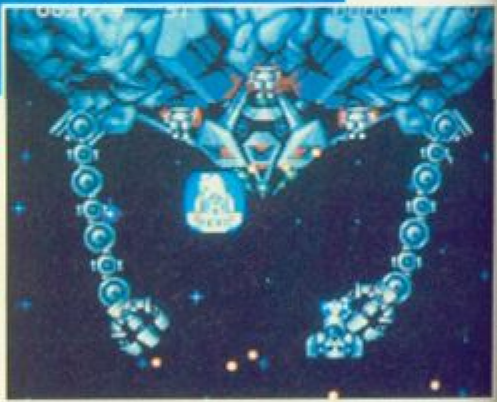
# FRENETIC

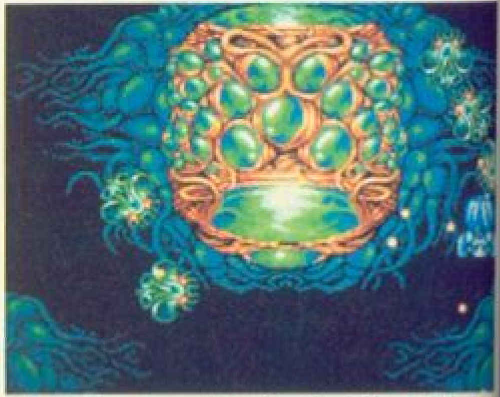
## CORE DESIGN attempt the Ultimate Shoot-'Em-Up...

There's a lot to recommend *Frenetic*: the aliens are large, fast and mean, the action's non-stop (perhaps a little too non-stop), the power-ups are meaty and the guardians are especially nasty. But even having apparently drawn on every other shoot-'em-up ever written, Core still seem to have let one of the genre's arch errors slip into the game: when you die you're stripped of all your power-ups. In a game as tough as this such a feature is unfair - you're unlikely to survive long on the pitiful standard-issue laser.

In the final analysis the best thing that can be said about *Frenetic* is that it's very competent. All it lacks is that certain spark of originality to lift it above the opposing hordes of *Xenon 2* and the superlative *SWIV* in particular. One for the shoot-'em-up junky looking for a new fix.

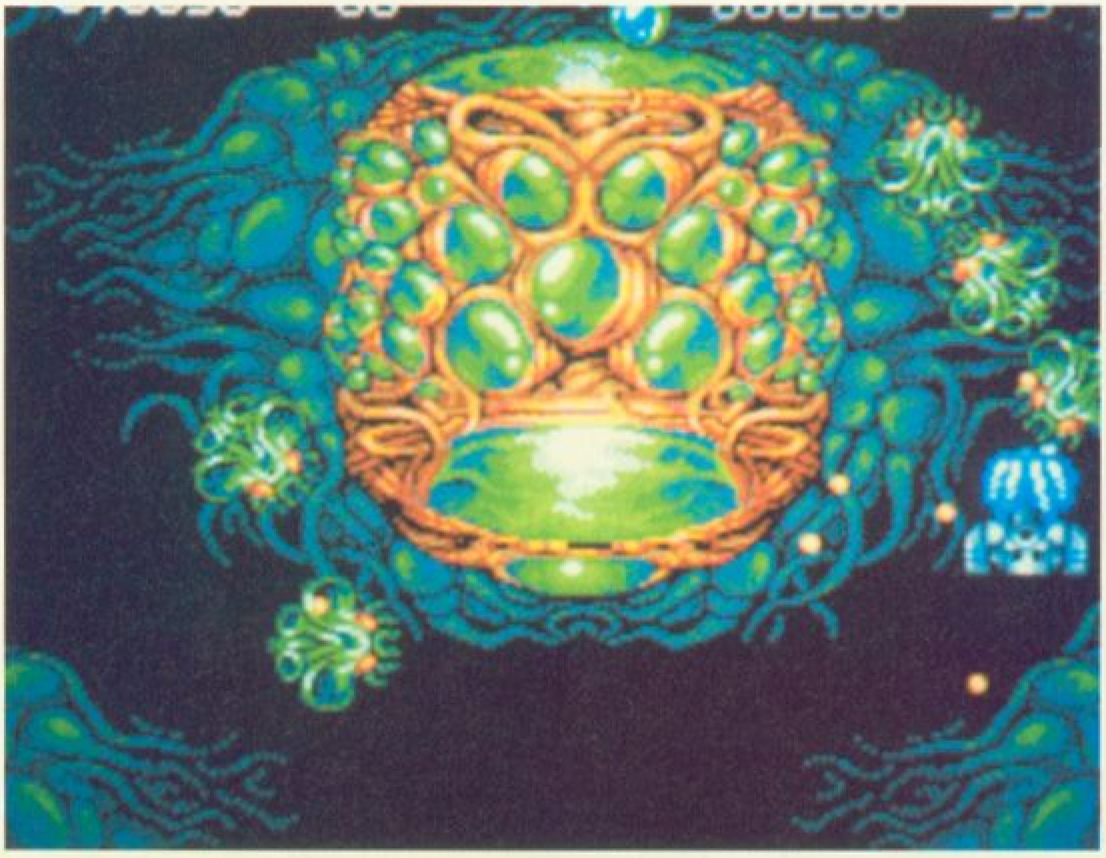
● **David Upchurch**



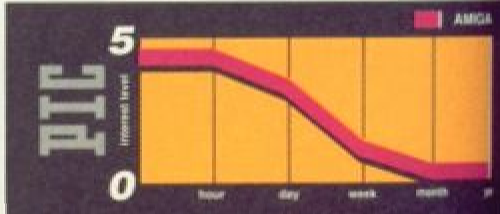


(Above) If you want an idea of how hard things get, then just take a look at this screenshot. If you hold back on the blasting then the screen becomes completely chocka with aliens. You'll not survive long here with the basic laser.

(Top) It takes two. But even then it takes ages to slay this end-of-level nasty.



The colourful background graphics are bizarro to the max. This giant blobby insect is protected by an armoured carapace that is near invulnerable to your firepower.



A smart intro and some slick programming can't disguise the fact that this is just another so-so shoot-'em-up. Like all of its ilk it's reasonably addictive, but the high difficulty setting is likely to turn you off sooner rather than later.

ACE RATING
**710**

| G | IQ | A | FF |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 3 | 6 | 6 |

**AMIGA**

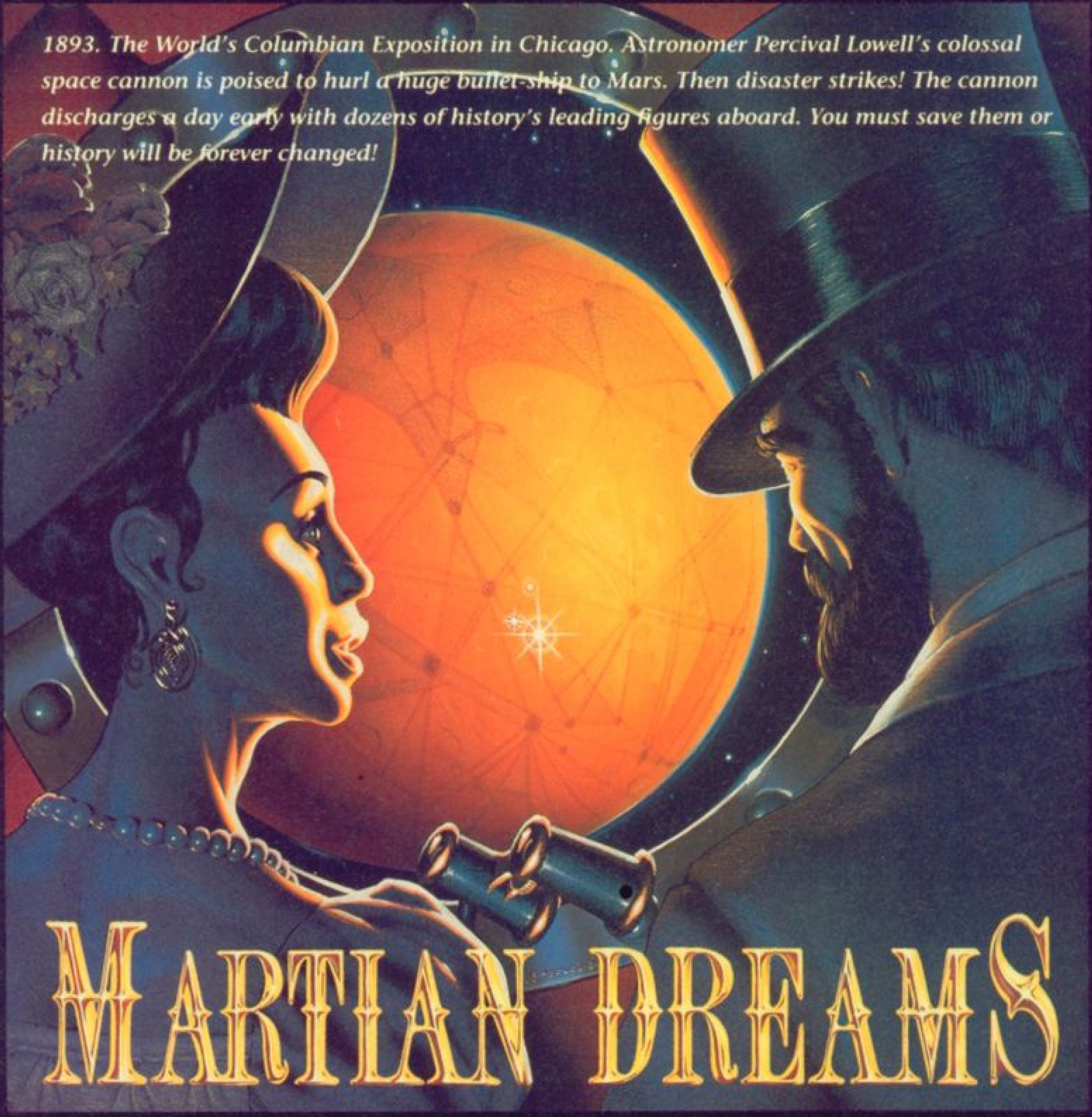
The chunky, almost cartoon-like, graphics make a pleasant change from the usual polished-chrome look, and the clanky rasping tune suits the action perfectly. Trouble is, there just isn't anything special enough about the gameplay to raise Frenetic above merely average.

**RELEASE DETAILS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AMIGA | £20.99 | OUT NOW |
| ATARI ST | £20.99 | OUT NOW |

# Ultima®

## WORLDS OF ADVENTURE 2



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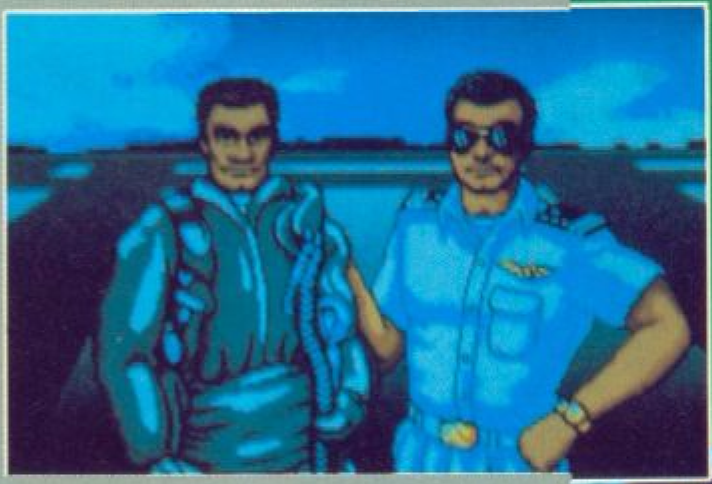
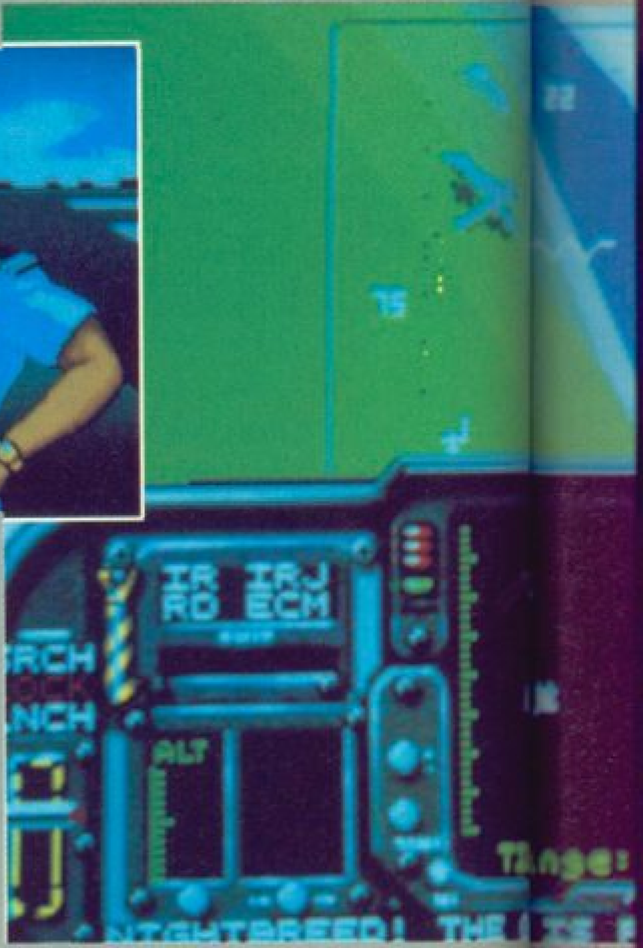
MINDSCAPE

# F-14 TOM

**With more flight simulations appearing more and more frequently, is computer airspace becoming a little too crowded for comfort? ACTIVISION is the latest to have its flighty effort cleared for take-off...**





(Above) Attractive EGA graphics await you - this one introducing you to your co-pilot - before you take to the air. FAB Virgil!

(Left) Pulling a considerable number of Gs in a hard turn, or "break" as us hardened speed jocks call it - as you are here - is no rare occurence in combat. Here, your efforts are about to be rewarded with a target lock on a fleeing MiG-21 - or maybe it's a pidgeon, it's a bit difficult to tell at this distance...

There's no shortage of flight sims for the PC - we reviewed one of the best, US Gold's *Jetfighter II*, in the July issue. This doesn't seem to discourage people from writing new sims, and so long as they do a decent job of it, why not?

Activision's *F-14 Tomcat* allows you to jump right into the air combat action, taking on MiGs over the Strait of Hormuz, or to fly your way through an entire career before taking on the more exciting missions. I always enjoy getting a preview of the hottest action before starting from the basics; after all, if you're a hopeless pilot, you might never see the best parts of the game otherwise!

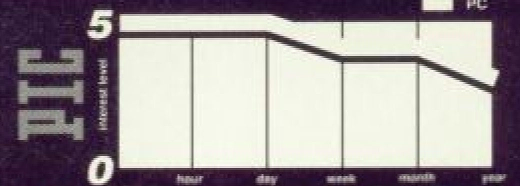
*F-14 Tomcat* uses filled polygonal graphics which are animated with reasonable speed and smoothness on a fast machine, although inevitably performance is not as good on slower ones. Fortunately you can improve performance by opting to reduce the background detail.

The game runs in VGA, MCGA, EGA and Tandy graphics modes, though for some reason VGA users cannot run from 5.25 inch disks. The game supports a huge range of sound boards including Roland LAPC-1/MT32, Sound Blaster, AdLib, PS/1 and so on, and depending on what you have installed the music and sound effects can add enjoyment to the game or be an irritating distraction which you will want to switch off.

Mouse, keyboard or joystick can be used as control devices, but in any case there's a selection of keys controlling functions such as radar range, weapons selection, thrust, internal and external views, and eject - which hopefully you shouldn't be forced to use.

The two-man F-14 is flown only by the US and, ironically, Iran; your aim in this sim is to complete three combat missions defending your home aircraft carrier, get transferred to the prestigious Naval Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun), and eventually reach the hallowed rank of Top Gun instructor. Your RIO (Radar Intercept Officer, otherwise known as GIB - Guy In the Back) will feed you information and suggested tactics, and as your performance improves, so does his.

After booting and watching the intro animation, selecting the Practice option lets you get into action without having to perform a carrier take-off; you can practice flying at Top Gun school against a range of opponents, or from a carrier.



Ideal for both the flight sim fanatic and the complete novice, F-14 Tomcat offers a combination of realism and fast action. If you want to plunge straight into battle you can - otherwise, the take-off, landing and maneouvreing routines will test your skill.

ACE RATING

**854**

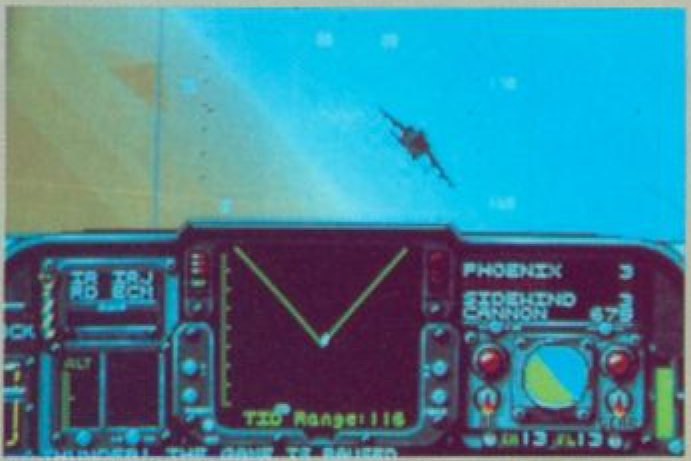
IBM PC

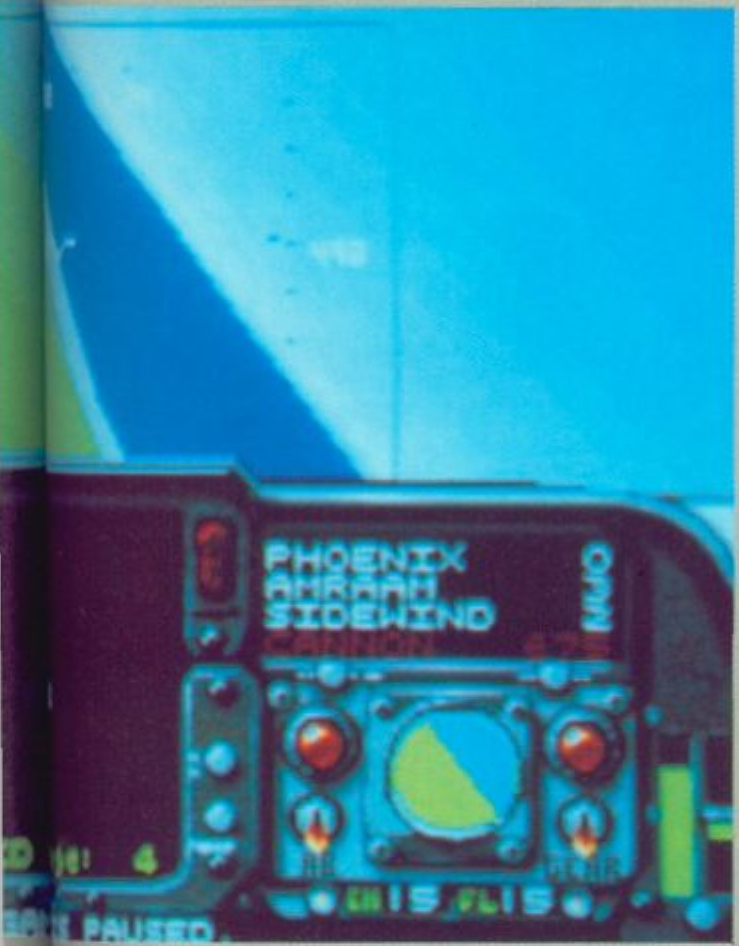
Exciting filled-polygon graphics and support for a wide range of sound boards make F-14 Tomcat one of the better-specified combat flight sims for the PC.

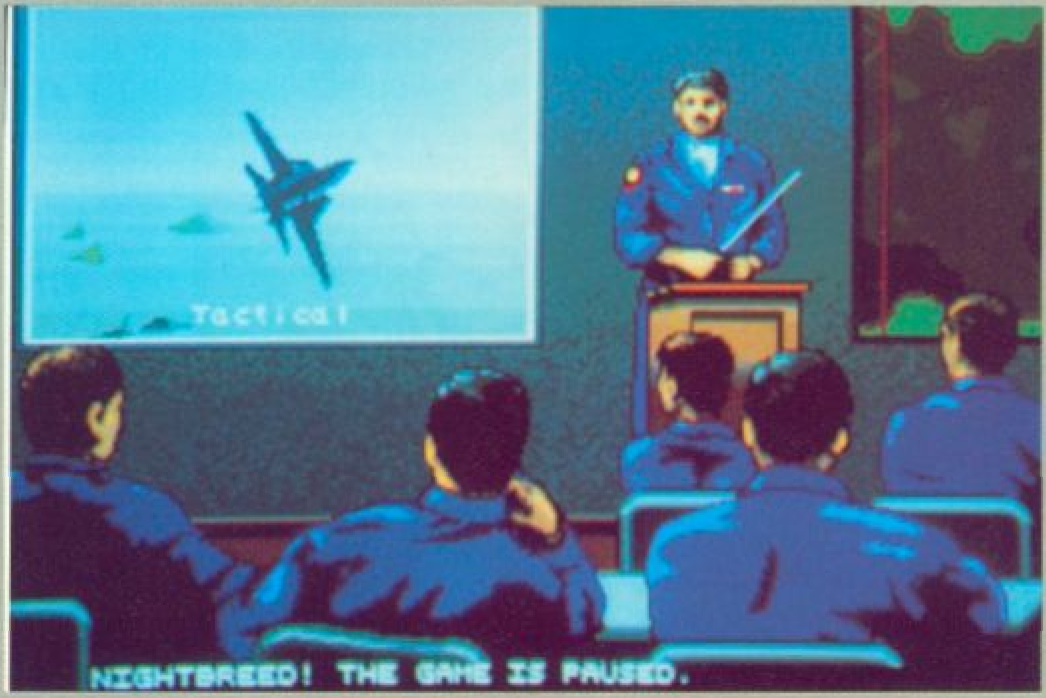
RELEASE DETAILS

IBM PC TBA OUT NOW

# CAT







NIGHTBREED! THE GAME IS PAUSED.

**(Above top) More high-G aerial combat, this time over a desert landscape with another enemy plane about to get nailed by a Sparrow missile up its exhaust.**

**(Above) Once the combat's over, it's back to base to review the mission and crack open a few ice-cold buds. Hoorah!**

If you choose to start a new flying career, you begin as an Ensign on the USS Eisenhower, facing a low threat; as you complete each mission, the threats become greater, and after every mission a career file shows your rank, call-sign, honours and so on.

The F-14 is supposed to be remarkably easy to fly; though it has variable-geometry wings, the profile is automatically adjusted by computer and doesn't require the pilot's attention. This ease of control is reflected in the game; in-flight controls such as throttle, afterburner, gear, altimeter and fuel displays are perfectly straightforward, and weapons are selected and fired using mouse buttons

You are supplied with Phoenix long-range, Sparrow medium range and Sidewinder short-range missiles, plus Vulcan cannon for point-blank work - quite enough, I found, to take out a slow-moving MiG. Chaff launchers help you to confuse enemy radar, while flares decoy heat-seeking missiles; these features tend to be damaged if you engage in close-quarters combat, so take care if you don't want to lose an essential advantage.

Your DDD (Data Detail Display) indicates the orientation of the plane currently being tracked by the fire control radar; the stationary plane at the centre of the display represents the Tomcat, and a bar graph marked ALT shows whether the other plane is above or below you. Meanwhile the TID (Tactical Information Display) shows ground and air targets, long-range targets, or close-range planes, depending on mode. This may not be entirely realistic, but it gives you all the info you need to complete your missions.

To enhance your flying pleasure you can select an internal view from the cockpit, or an external view of your Tomcat which can be rotated clockwise or anticlockwise. You can also select views from your carrier or control tower, or even from your missiles - pretty thrilling as you approach impact.

The Heads-Up Display helps you to keep track of your target and weapon status, and a target reticle (oo-er!) tells you when you're locked on target. You can change targets by pressing the alternate mouse button. There's a terrific explosion when you zap a MiG, and you can even follow the wreckage as it spirals to earth.

The only reservation you could reasonably express about *F-14 Tomcat* is that it's a very forgiving game; if you aim your plane at the desert sands and eject, your post-flight debriefing is quite likely to decide that your actions were justified and you should be returned to active duty a.s.a.p.

Loads of details in the manual on Tomcat specifications, weapons, enemy planes and tactics give you lots of background to work with. It's a satisfying sim without too much excess baggage.

● **Chris Jenkins**

# Champion of the Raj

## Think that conquering India would be fun? Think again...

Good grief. I don't believe that I have ever seen a game as shoddy as this. Imagine a game, a game from your worst, deepest, most private and hellish nightmare become living, breathing reality. A game which has a disk access routine so bad that at times it's almost impossible to select icons because the processor is constantly repositioning the pointer - which is always at least half a second behind the actual mouse movements. A game that spends an average time of nearly a minute before responding to the most simple decision.

This is *Champion of the Raj.*

Set in India at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, *Champion of the Raj* casts you - or rather you cast yourself - as the leader of any one of the six factions who are feuding for control of the strife-torn country. At grass roots level it's just a little similar to that old favourite *Defender of the Crown* - i.e. you've got a landscape made up of different territories, and the object is simply to boot out the opposing factions and expand your empire as widely throughout India as possible. How you go about this is entirely up to you - you can stock up on troops and take the unsubtle approach, doing battle with opposing armies for territorial control, or do things a little more peacefully, staging festivals and whispering into the right ears in order to persuade people to join your empire without bloodshed.

If you take the former option, some forward planning is required. The taxes you glean from the people under your imperial control must be used correctly, buying troops and equipping them with the right weapons. On the field of battle, you can choose to control the action yourself, or sit back as an observer and let the statistics decide. Even if you want to spread peace and kisses and love, it's advisable to spend a moderate portion of your cash on the military, just in case one of the other five leaders (who remain active throughout the game) tries to capture your territory.

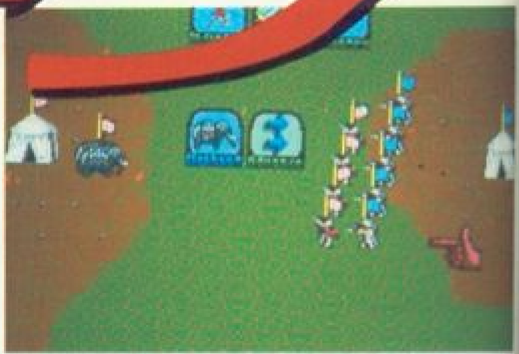
Again like *Defender of the Crown*, the decisions you make often lead to mini-arcade games. There's a Tiger Hunt, where you and your mates take potshots at innocent wildlife, Elephant Racing (don't laugh), swordfights, battles against Thug anarchists and a Capture-the-Palace affair that you need to win in order to capture the capital state of an empire.

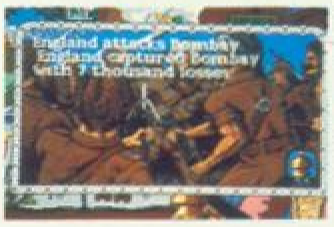
Apart from the crippling disk routines, the first thing that really hits you about *Champion of the Raj* is the amateurish look of the whole game. Forget about subtle use of colours or intricate sprites - the whole thing looks like a direct port from the not-especially-attractive-in the-first-place PC version. And sound? Don't talk to me about sound. On the back of the box *it reads it's got a* 'stunningly atmospheric soundtrack'. What a joke! There's nothing even remotely Indian about the music (unless the Indians were playing Casio pocket keyboards at the time of the British occupation). You'll thank God your monitor's got a volume switch.

The strategy itself may at times be pretty basic (the success of a festival is determined by how many elephants are in it), but you can't help feeling that underneath all this torturous disk access, there's a half-decent game fighting to get out.

This, however, is no excuse for the absolutely appalling presentation, and it's almost inconceivable that the combined forces of PSS and Level 9 could come up with something as downright ham-fisted as this. But they have, and you really wonder what they're playing at. Oh, and just to add insult to injury, the game crashed on a number of occasions. Not recommended.

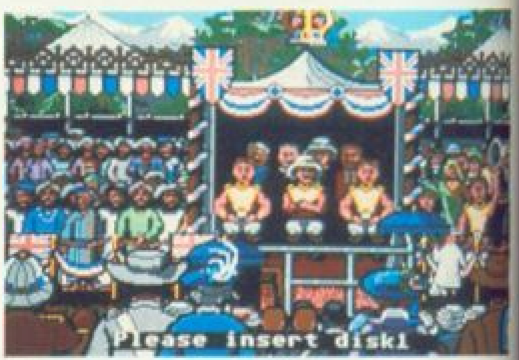
● Gary Whitta





England attacks Bombay
England captured Bombay
with 7 thousand losses

**Torturously-long disk access makes *Champion of the Raj* a nightmare to play, with even the simplest decision taking around ten to fifteen seconds to process.**



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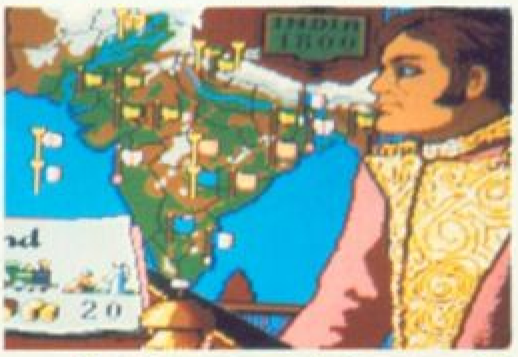
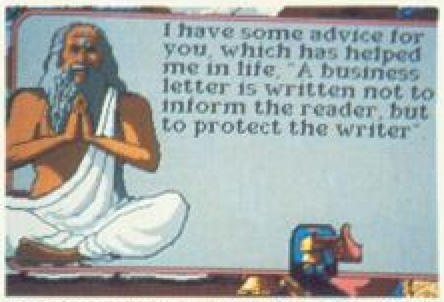
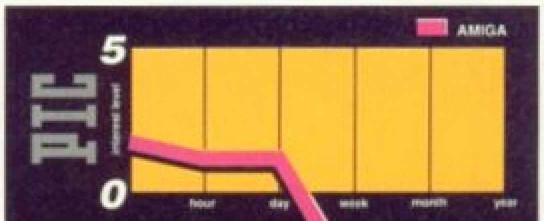




I have some advice for you, which has helped me in life, "A business letter is written not to inform the reader, but to protect the writer"

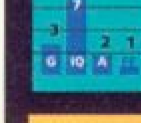
**Organise festivals to win popularity in foreign territories. The more elephants you buy, the more effective your publicity will be. Oh, what fun!**



**Quite possibly the most unplayable game ever written, not because of any failings in the game design, but because of the godawful programming and presentation that renders the whole thing almost totally inaccessible. Even the arcade sequences are laughable. Keep well away and don't look back.**

ACE RATING

270



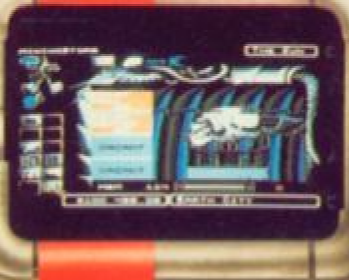
AMIGA

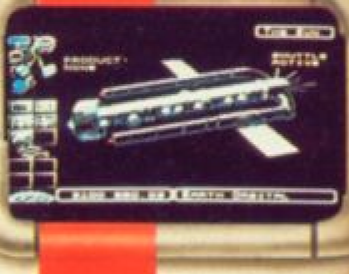
Do Amiga owners really want to see S[illegible]sic typeface text used in their games? We think not. And what about hopelessly ineffective music that sounds like it's being played on a toy piano? Or graphics that look like they've come straight out of an EGA PC? Sorry, but the whole thing is a complete blasphemy to the Amiga. We're surprised our machine didn't spit the disk out in disgust.

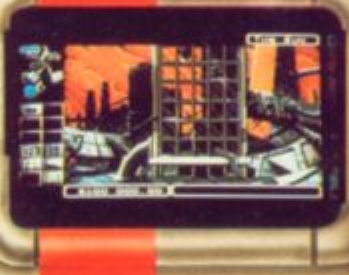
RELEASE DETAILS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| AMIGA | £24.99 | OUT NOW |
| ATARI ST | £24.99 | OUT NOW |
| IBM PC | £24.99 | OUT NOW |

Actual 16 Bit Screens







## THE NEXT MILLENIUM

It is the end of the 31st Century. Nearly one thousand years ago man colonised the moon, and from there created a range of human mutations which were left to develop other planets. At the same time, life on earth was destroyed by a cataclysmic climatic change.

Now the mutant races are at war with each other, and man has returned to Earth, rebuilt civilisation, and forgotten about past adventures.

Deep in Earth City, plans have been made to explore space again. The race has started to develop Earth's resources, to research new technology, to build for future adventures.

You must control the training, research, resources, production and stores of Earth City in a complex strategic battle to maximise the planet's supplies. You must construct and pilot the hi-tech space shuttles and ships needed for mankind to venture out into the furthest reaches of the war-torn solar system. Operation Deuteros has begun.

Available in August on Amiga & Atari ST

**ACTIVISION**

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# TNT Tricks 'n' Tactics

**Phew! Have we been hard at play! Here are the first instalments to playing guides for *Gods, Space Quest IV and Super Mario World,* and the concluding half of the *Supercars 2* tips. We're too good to you...**

## Gods

Because you demanded it - an extensive playing guide to the latest mega-game from the Bitmap Bros. This month ACE brings you some general playing tips and a guide to some of the first level's secrets. Next month get ready for the full guide to Levels 2, 3 & 4.

### GENERAL TIPS

- Monsters appear in waves, and teleport onto the screen at the same point. When the last monster in a wave has been killed, it drops some sort of bonus. DON'T wander into the teleport area until you're sure you've killed the last monster in a wave - otherwise the monsters will teleport on top of you and rapidly drain your energy

- The bonuses don't disappear. Leave collecting them until after you've killed all the creatures in the vicinity. Even if a smart bomb or health bonus appears, be sure you can reach it without getting hit otherwise it just isn't worth the risk.

- Although there's no time limit on each World as a whole, doing things quickly will result in a speed bonus.

### LEVEL 1

Switches play a major role in *Gods,* turning off traps, opening doors and - if you're lucky - revealing secret rooms. In the following guide, 'throw a switch' means pull it down or up (depending on its current position), whereas 'toggle a switch' means pull it down and then push it back up again.

### WORLD 1

This world is really quite simple. That said, there are a few things you may not have discovered.

At the very start of the World, you'll have no doubt noticed the teleport gem twirling out of reach above your head. To get it, go right, toggle the first switch you come to. Go up then left. When you get to the next switch, toggle this too. Jump left and get the key. As you return right you should see the floor slide back beneath you - this new passageway should take you to the gem which will teleport you towards the end of the World.

Neat as this is, it's a bit of a coward's way out. The braver player will find more rewards if they ignore this cheat and continue. Eventually you should come to three switches in a row. Throw the middle one to turn off the spikes nearby. Go back right and throw this switch; a chest, key and some monsters should appear. Kill the bad guys and open the chest with the key for oodles of treasure. Now throw the right switch again, walk left and throw the middle switch, then throw the left switch. A gem should appear and fall down on your head.

Now comes the tricky part - speed is of the essence. Once you've got the gem, ignore the monsters that appear. Go left and climb the ladder. Kill the monster to your right, jump across the gap and throw the treasure room's door switch. Climb the ladder and throw the World's door switch. A platform should appear to your left. Jump onto it and press the pressure pad above your head. A bonus gem will fall down. Now go back, mop up any stragglers, collect the treasure and World key and exit through the World door.

### WORLD 2

Climb up the ladder and go left. A single monster should appear on a platform. Kill it but don't collect the gem or press the pressure pad. Carry on going left. You should see a key. Kill the monsters that appear and collect the key. Quickly climb up to the platform with the gem on it, collect the gem and press the pad. If you were fast enough a jump potion should appear - take it.

Jump up to the left, then jump right. You should find yourself on a long platform liberally sprinkled with juicy bonuses. Lap 'em up. Go right and jump into space. You should find yourself on an invisible platform covered in yet more bonuses! Walk right and drop down. You'll land on a platform with a half-health potion and a mask on it. Yum! Drop down onto the floor below.

If you want you can now go left and kill some more monsters and press some pressure pads, but it's not really worth it. All the pressure pads do is open some trapdoors later on in the treasure room, but you'll find the going easier if you don't bother activating them.

Go down the ladder and then right to find a pot and some extra fire power, then carry on going down. You should now be in a room with two switches and a teleport gem. Throw the switch on the far right first, then throw the one on the left. The trapdoor should open and the gem drop down. This will teleport you to a secret room containing a second pot. Pick it up and teleport back out.

Climb the ladder and jump into the niche on the right. Kill the two monsters that appear and collect the key they drop. Go down the ladder, go right and throw the switch - this closes a trapdoor at the bottom of the shaft to the right. (By the way, a pretty vicious monster attack occurs around here, so be careful!) Go left to get the key, then go back right and drop down the shaft.

You should now find yourself at the door to the treasure room. Enter it, and take care you don't fall down the open trapdoor. There's a key in here, but you'll probably find you haven't any room in you inventory to pick it up. So, carefully

nudge yourself over the open trapdoor and drop an item - if you're in the right position it should drop down. Pick up the key and then drop through the trapdoor yourself.

Open the chest, then enter the pottery via the door on your left. Inside you'll be rewarded with a bonus for bringing the second pot, and given the World key. Exit and go right. Take care near the World door - a monster appears just a you approach and it's very easy to blunder into it. Throw the switch and leave the World.

### IN THE SHOP

Buy lots of throwing stars and top up your energy. 'Nuff said.

### WORLD 3

Go up and left. Toggle the switch to turn off the spike on the platform above. Carry on climbing, then toggle the next switch you come to - this should close the trapdoors and turn off the spike in the pit at the bottom of the chamber. Jump onto the trapdoor to the right, then drop down into the pit. This should reward you with a jump potion which you can use to reach the top left of the chamber.

Go up the ladder and then go right. Kill all the monsters that appear and pick up the key they drop. Now throw the switch and go down. Go right. You should come to a switch. Throwing it will open the trapdoors, leading to some luvverly treasure, but don't do that yet. Quickly go right as far as you can, drop down and throw the switch. A secret treasure room should be revealed. Having plundered the loot, go back and collect the other treasure.

Eventually you should find yourself above ground. Climb the long ladder. At the top go left across the platforms - eventually you should come to a key. Collect it then go back right to find some stone gargoyles. These gargoyles will start coming to life. Wait around and pick them off for a hefty treasure bonus.

Go right and go through the first door you come to. This will take you to a platform with a key on it. (Anyone know how to get at those gems on the platform above your head here?) Go right on the moving platform. Eventually you should find yourself back where those gargoyles were. Throw the switch to open the trapdoor, run right and grab the shield that appears. This will protect you from harm as you make the long drop to a secret door.

Go through the door to reach a high platform. Collect the key and go through the door to enter the treasure room. Inside you'll find a lightning bolt weapon - very handy against the Centurion later on. Leave and work your way down to exit the World.

### THE CENTURION

Although the giant Centurion looks pretty hard, he's pretty easy to kill. Just try and stay under the bounce of his fireballs and keep blasting away.

# Space Quest IV

Huzzah! The first half of the solution to Sierra's hilarious interstellar epic. But don't thank us - thank the game cracking genius of Dave Driesen in Antwerp, Belgium! The concluding half will appear next month. (And we mean it!)

### PART ONE: SPACE QUEST 12 - VOHAUL'S REVENGE 2

(Note that generally clicking on something requires the hand cursor to be selected, unless otherwise stated.)

After you've watched the intro (which you should see at least once), walk east and click on the rope at the bottom of the screen. Stand between the two red pillars at the upper right of the screen, select the rope from your inventory and click the rope cursor on the ground. After a while a pink bunny should whoosh by. Click on the rope to pull it in.

Walk west until you see a skimmer parked by the side of the road. Click on the skimmer, and then click on the glove compartment. It should pop open allowing you to get the laptop computer inside. Walk north then go east twice. Click on all the sewer grates until you find one you can open. Go down. Walk over to the table and click on the empty jar. If you like, click on the brown pad. Click on the door on the west wall to open it.

Inside the sewers head north, then west. Walk down the pipe leading south until a green blob comes out of the grating in the north wall, but don't walk off the screen. Select the empty jar from your inventory and then click on the blob to pick it up. Go south and then west at the crossing. Click on the ladder on the west wall, and after the animation sequence click on the ground between you and the ship. Walk east and click on the landing gear's hatch.

When you get to the supercomputer, head west and wait until the two cops start talking to each other. Click on the time pod the second cop arrived in. Get past the copy protection and make a note of the symbols on the display. On the keypad, hold down 'Control' and 'S' to go time-travelling.

### PART TWO: SPACE QUEST 10 - THE LATEX BABES OF ESTROS

Walk off the left-hand side of the screen and keep going until you see a pterodactyl fly by. Head south and quickly click the eye cursor on the shadow. Go back to your time pod and head south. You should be caught by the pterodactyl and carried to its nest.

Wait for the Sequel Police to arrive and click on the dead guy. Switch to the walk cursor and go through the hole in the bottom of the nest. Spend a while admiring the scenery, then when the girl starts talking to you, do what she asks and click the walk cursor on the submarine.

In the base, watch the animation and after the sea slug starts tickling your legs (!), click on the button near your right hand to zap it. Having made a miraculous escape, click on the bottles of gas to your right. When the view cuts to a close-up of you and the slug, click the gas bottle cursor on the slug. Now let's go shopping.

When the girls leave, one of them drops a card which you should pick up. Walk east and wait until you pass the Autobucks Teller Machine next to the software shop and walk over to it. Get the card from your inventory and click on the machine. Get back on the conveyor belt. Stay on it until you pass the Big and Tall male clothing store and enter it.

Click the talk cursor on the 'droid and, when you have your pants back on, select the buckazoid from your inventory and click on the 'droid. Walk south out of the store and go clockwise on the conveyor to get to the Monolith Burger bar.

Enter and apply for a job by clicking the talk icon on the manager a couple of times. Earn around 25 buckazoids then get fired by getting a load of burgers rejected. Follow the conveyor belt to its end and pick up the cigar your ex-boss tossed away. Carry on to the female clothing store.

Talk to the sales 'droid, and after you've finished changing go back to the Autobucks machine. Insert the card again and clean the machine out. You should now be 2001 buckazoids richer. Go to the software shop and click on the bargain bin. You should eventually uncover a copy of the *Space Quest IV Hint Revealer*. Use it to find the first three symbols for the co-ordinates to Ulence Flats (later). The other three are on the piece of chewing gum. Find them out by clicking the cursor on the items in your inventory.

Buy the book, then return to the female clothing store and get back into your normal clothes. Go one screen clockwise to reach the arcade and enter it on the left side. Inside, try and walk around the middle clockwise. The Sequel Police should turn up again. (This is a good time to save the game.)

After the first guy leaves the screen to the south, follow him and follow the conveyor belt clockwise until you reach the end. You arrive at the right-hand side of the screen. Get off the conveyor and leave using the conveyor to the east (i.e. the bottom one). This way, the guys should miss you. Follow the belt anti-clockwise and enter RadioShock.

The two guards have a conversation and then leave. In the bottom left corner of the screen are some stairs. Climb them and when you regain control of Roger head for the top of the screen PRONTO! On this screen, keep moving until you get some armed company. Now quickly go to the bottom of the screen and down the stairs. The guards should be gone. Follow the conveyor anti-clockwise until you reach the arcade. Enter and click on the time pod. Type in the codes from the hint book and the gum.

Now you're ready for Part Three: *Space Quest I* - next month!

# Supercars 2

As promised last month, here are the maps and guides to the Medium and Hard levels of Gremlin's superb smash 'n' crasher...

**MEDIUM**

1 No problems. Handbrake turn the tight corners to save slowing down.

2 Just avoid collisions on the chicanes, even if it means driving slower. Collisions could slow you down and let other cars get away from you.

3 A choice of routes here! The route with the jump saves a lot of time. Practice! Look ahead to see if the gates are open - don't wait for them.

4 Looks difficult but all you need to remember is where the jump is and to take your time at cross overs. Homing missiles are handy here.

5 Do not get pushed off course or you will be penalised a lap. Otherwise race around at full speed making full use of the handbrake turns.

6 Again the jump choice is much faster but beware! If you take it too fast you'll jump over the second take off point. So ease off the accelerator for a micro-second as you approach.

7 Not much time to see the trains coming here. Since it's the last course, spend lots of money on homing missiles and turbo jumps to help you jump over the trains.

**HARD**

1 Use front missiles on the long straights if necessary, but mainly just be wary of cross overs.

2 Not much to say here, just make sure that - as usual - you have a clear run at the jumps.

3 Take the shortcuts on spec; if they're open go for it, otherwise go around - don't wait for them to open. With the trains it's up to you - you can hang around to see if the train's coming or just try and zip through and pray for luck!

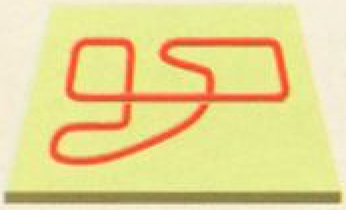
4 Just master the art of doing triples jumps here. Super missiles are very handy in the tunnel.

5 In this case it is usually worth waiting for the gates to open, but that's easier said than done. A large supply of turbo jumps are fairly essential to get over the trains.

6 Get the right angle going around corner X and you should be able to jump okay. Not much you can do about the cross over.

7 Careful how you line up on the jumps - they're very deceptive. Missiles are very handy here, especially homing and front missiles. Shoot them off as you jump to take out any cars thinking of ramming you.

## MEDIUM LEVEL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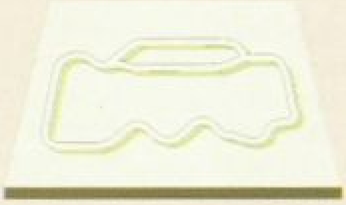
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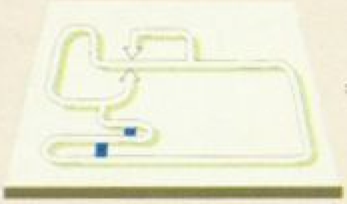
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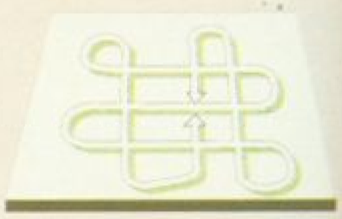
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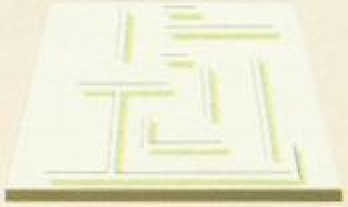
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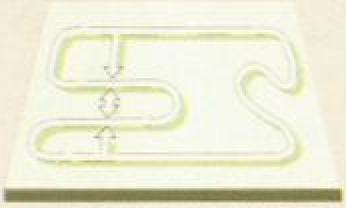
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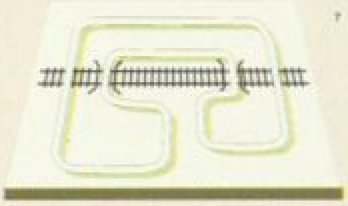
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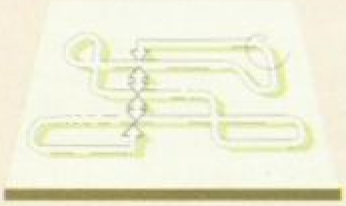
## HARD LEVEL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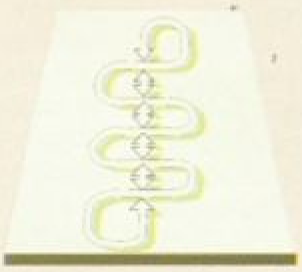
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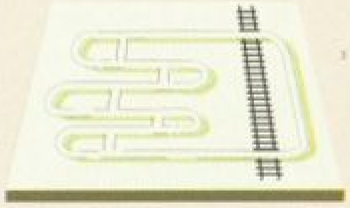
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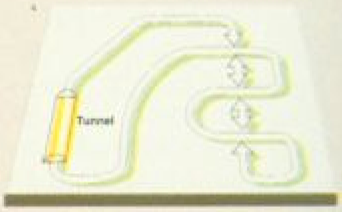

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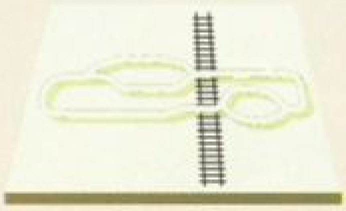
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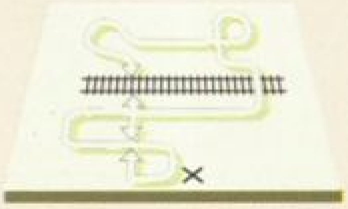

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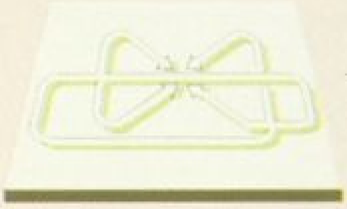
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# Console Corner

## Super Mario World

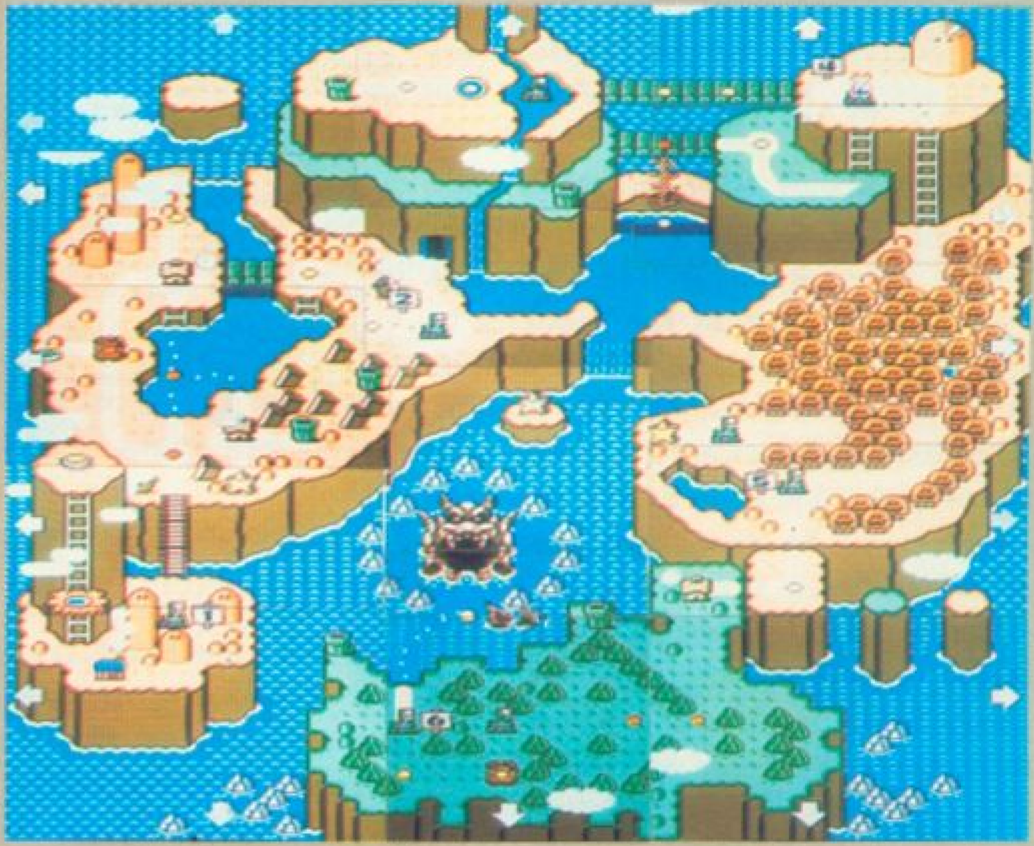
After much hard playing and much cutting and pasting, ACE is proud to bring you the full overview map of *Mario World* and the close-up maps of the start and under the mountain, complete with notes on how to find some of the more elusive secret locations. Next month we'll show you how to get through the woods, reveal the horrors inside the rock dragon's mouth, take a trip to star island and guide  you to the secret levels...

**You've got to have a cape to do this. At the start of the level, run a little way to the right, then run back left and take off. You should find a platform floating in the sky. Run along it and drop off the end to find four extra lives and a secret exit.**

**A real pain, this one. The trick is to get the cape, and fly over the buzz saws towards the end gate. Swoop down under the gate then pull up so that you don't fall off the bottom of the screen. Carry on flying right to find a second gate. Spooky!**

**One of the green pipes in the ceiling leads to a secret room. Inside you should find four yellow blocks forming some steps and a turtle shell trapped under yet more blocks. Spin onto these blocks and get the shell. Throw the shell straight up do that it hits the top block in the steps. A vine should form leading to a key and keyhole, which open a pathway to the green pod room level.**

**Right at the end of the level, just before the end gate, there's key and keyhole on two platforms high up in the sky. If you're clever you can fly across the level to reach them, but it's easier to find the green pod room first, then come back here and run up the newly-formed wall.**

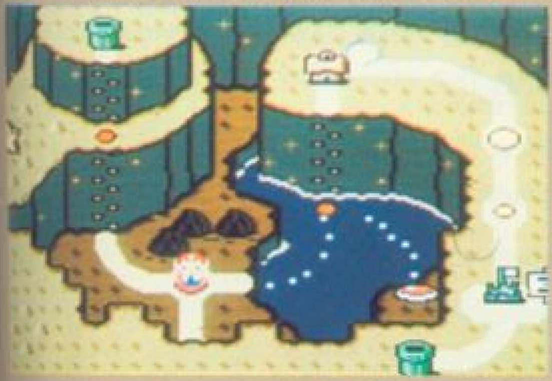


**You'll have no doubt found the pod that makes the exit door appear. BUT! If you hit the yellow block right above the door, a vine will grow taking you to the teleportation star... after you've fought a fearsome giant ghost!**

**Pretty easy. Just get the cape and fly under the end gate to find a second exit.**

**Bit of an admission to make here - we don't quite understand how we did this one. If you keep replaying it you should eventually find two exits, one to take you to the next level, and one that just takes you down the pipe to the north.**

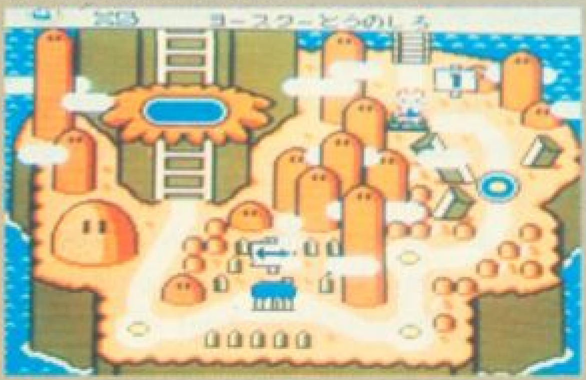
### UNDER THE MOUNTAIN...



**On your travels you should come across a pod on top of a huge pile of yellow blocks. Pick it up and carry it left onto solid ground, then pop it. Run left and go down the shaft that was formerly blocked. You should find a key and keyhole.**

**You've got to have been to the red pod room to find the secret exit. If you have it's very easy, so I'll leave you to work it out...**

### IN THE BEGINNING...



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AMEBOY

## Gargoyle's Quest

A big thanks to Mike Walpole for these access codes to Villagea 1 to 6...

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| llage 1 | F90X | GK5N |
| llage 2 | CK49 | 7PL8 |
| llage 3 | P7IL | SZCN |
| llage 4 | 8MSS | EEZV |
| Village 5 | ILAQ | BJ8E |
| Village 6 | DXNG | CTWN |

The following aren't level codes but they will take you to other mysterious locations throughout the game...

| | |
|---|---|
| AT6X | VFXG |
| BZK4 | 75A6 |
| ICTN | BH1X |
| 7MRG | KB56 |
| FHOC | WKYK |
| ATMQ | XFBV |

### BUBBLE BOBBLE

More sterling work by Mike! This cutesy platform escapade may be fun to play but it's fiendishly hard to finish. So how about this for a cheat. Type in KGBJ to play the last level. This code also lets you play any level from 1 to 100 using left and right on the joypad.

# IT'S SHO

My, how time flies by. Just when it seemed as if the world had finally calmed down after the first rip-roaring, rooting-tooting, sew-a-button-on-that European Computer Entertainment Show last September, it's upon us again, bigger, badder and better!

Yes, it's time for the Second ECES. For three days in September, the eyes of the world will be firmly focused on Earl's Court 2 in London as every major player and hot product in the industry is brought together in an apocalyptic fusion of fun, thrills and curled-up sandwiches. EMAP Images (the publishers of ACE) are putting the whole shebang together with the backing of the Prince's Trust. We, of course, will be there, along with sister magazines Computer & Video Games, Mean Machines, CU Amiga, Sinclair User, PC Leisure and the two The Ones.

Just about every major software and hardware producer will be there showing off their latest wares (some in very elaborate fashion), and there'll be no shortage of special events to keep the hall rocking. The top games players from Europe, USA and Japan will be clashing in the World Computer Games Championship, W Industries will be giving you the opportunity to sample the miracle of Virtual Reality for yourself and there'll be a Sponsored Gameathon where celebrities from the worlds of film, TV, sport, music and politics will be knocking up high scores in aid of the Prince's Trust. And top Radio 1 DJs Jakki Brambles and Simon Mayo will be broadcasting LIVE to the nation from the show hall on Saturday morning.

Not enough for you? Alright. Match magazine will be there, fronting a VERY special Kick Off 2 event, CU Amiga will be holding its second Public Domain Demos competition and the World Champion Skateboard and BMX team will be on hand all day every day, with a stunning halfpipe acrobatic display. The amazing Super X and R360 machines will be there, and of course ACE will be making no inconsiderable contribution with two very special events...

## THE LIVING ROOM OF THE FUTURE II

The future's never looked brighter. We'll be giving you the chance to take a break from today's hum-drum existence and sample life in the years to come. In the living room this year will be High Definition Television, the digital-audio mediums of tomorrow, CDI, CDTV, Photo-CD, the Data Discman, DCC, DAT... and who knows, you may even get a chance to have yourself demolecularised and reintegrated in the ACE Teleportation Chamber! (Oh yes).

## PLUS! THE ACE CONFERENCES

Throughout the show, ACE will be presenting a series of action-packed conferences, in which some of the most knowledgeable and respected figures in the world of advanced computer entertainment will be exclusively flying in from the USA to lend their expert views on what YOU will be playing in the years ahead. Officially, the conferences are only open to the industry's top movers and shakers, but next month we'll be giving YOU the chance to win a ticket to this amazing event, along with details of how you can save a few bob on the entrance fee. Stay tuned...

### THE DATES

6th-8th September 1991

### THE TIMES

9am - 6pm Friday, Saturday. 9am - 5pm Sunday

### THE PLACE

The Earl's Court 2 Exhibition Centre, Earl's Court, London

### THE PRICE

£7 per ticket on the door or in advance.

# WTIME!

And while we're talking about the future, what about...

## NEXT MONTH

THE
EUROPEAN
COMPUTER
ENTERTAINMENT
SHOW
1991

**Even as you read this page, the white-hot molten mass of ideas and words, scorching with incision and originality known as the ACE September Issue is taking form.**

**It's being melded and formed by master craftsmen into an even finer example of computer entertainment reading, especially for you.**

**And even at this early stage, some definite shapes are forming in the seething mixture. So look, if you will, over the safety rail, down into the depths where ideas and criticisms so pure and strong run unrestrained and untarnished.**

**What can you look forward to?**

- **MORE Reviews of the top games on your machine than ever before.**

- **MORE In The Works features on Lotus 2, Monstrum Horendrum and Megatwins**

- **MORE Tricks'n'Tactics featuring Mario, Secret of Monkey Island, Space Quest IV and Gods.**

- **MORE Exclusive software features and interviews, giving you an angle on the gaming world unavailable in any other magazine.**

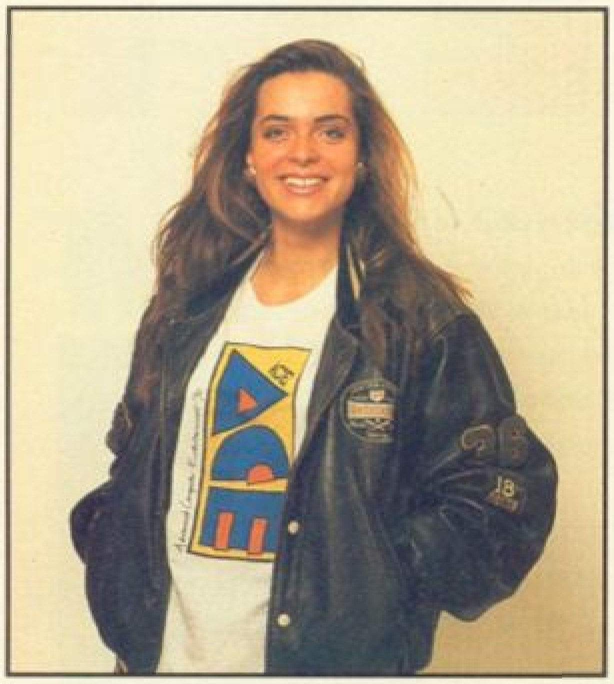
- **PLUS: An in-depth analysis of Super R-Type on the Super Famicom, a game which promises to blow Mario out of the water.**

ACE

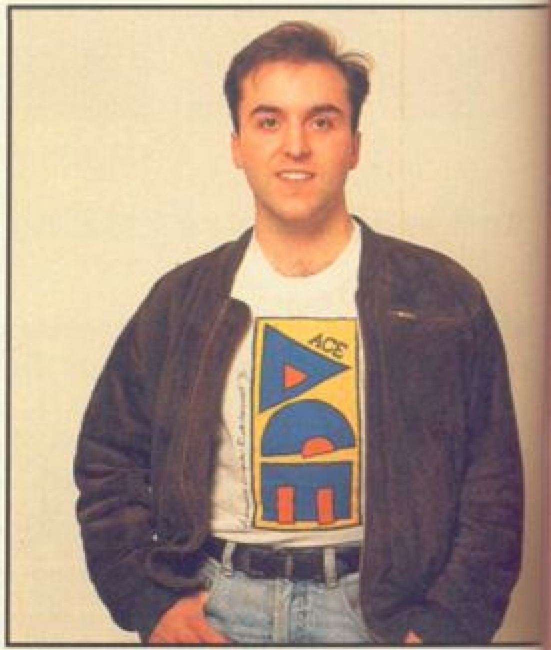
**And we'll also be making an important announcement which will bring ACE blasting into the 21st Century.**

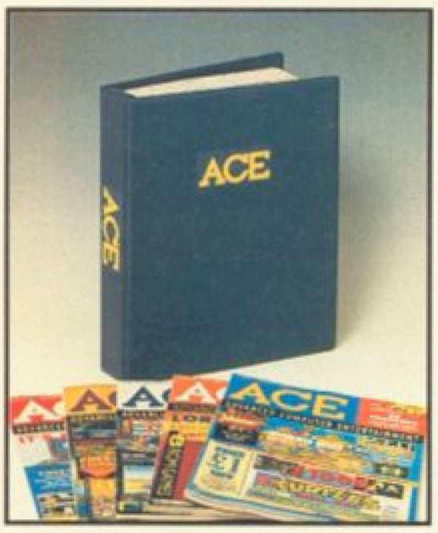
**ACE September. On sale 8th August.**
**Miss it at your peril.**

# ACE MERCHANDISE OFFER



There can surely be nothing more sexy and fashionable than the ACE t-shirt. This latest item in the *Ace Clothing Collection* is what every self respecting computing genius will be wearing this season. The eye catching ensemble has been exclusively designed by ACE's own art editor, Jim "Gaultier" Willis, for the lover of fine things and the reader with good taste. The t-shirt is available in sizes small, medium and extra large and can be purchased at the ridiculously low price of £5.99





**There is no better way of storing your copies of this, the world's finest computer entertainment magazine, than in an ACE binder. The binders are available in two designs - so as to satisfy even the most stalwart supporter of style and quality - and can be yours for the embarrassingly inexpensive price of £5.99**

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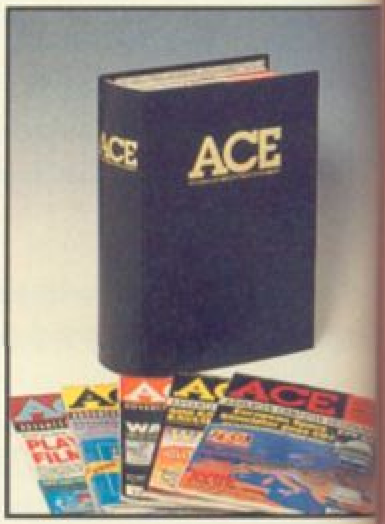

▲ **ACE Binder A**

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**PENTREBACH, MERTHYR TYDFIL, MID GLAMORGAN CF48 4DR**

# in the PINK

CDI 601 Compact Disc Interactive

American readers will be able to pick up this CD-I machine in a couple of month's time – European readers will have to make do with drooling over it in the Pink Hardware section (from next month) until September 1992, when an upgraded version will be launched over here...

# CONTENTS

### 92 ACE Charts

The industry's most authoritative, controversial charts. first, you can find out which games have been getting the hottest reviews in ALL UK games magazines. Next, you can see how they're selling. And do the two always go together? Well, what do YOU think? And to top it all, you get a chance to win a prize by predicting next month's chart entries.

### 96 Hardware Buyer's Guide

Our definitive tech listings and buyer's guide. Updated every month to keep you up-to-date on the hardware options in the high street. Check out the power, the programs, and the potential of each machine before you buy...

### 117 The ACE Prize Crossword

Aces puzzle over R&D and get the wind up (6). And you can win a prize if you crack our monthly poser...

### 100 Shopwatch

Dirk Longhorn fires a laser at CDTV.

### 100 ACE Back Issues

Classic coverage of the burning issues in computer entertainment. If you missed 'em, you can still catch up...

### 103 Direct Line

Amiga, PC, ST, Megadrive, Game Boy and Lynx owners get the latest instalment of the ACE machine-specific chat columns.

### 111 Hot off the Shelf

Our definitive listing of games that have received top ratings in ACE over the last few months and should still be on sale in your local software emporium...

### 119 Public Domain

Power playing for fewer pennies...Pat Winstanley checks out this month's selection of games from the public domain.

### 121 The ACE Diary

Our monthly guide to what's on where, what's out when, and a host of other trivia items for the month ahead...

### 122 The Blitter End

Shock claims that some consoles may actually replace sex in human society. Plus news of a surprise ACE Conference....

ACE
THE ULTIMATE GAMES MAGAZINE
ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
CRIME BUSTER!
ACE IN THE STATES
WING COMMANDER
CDTV
THINK PINK!

ACE has brought you over 40 issues, all packed with info on games technology. If you're missing any back issues – such as this one, which gave you exclusive coverage of the first PC based VR system – then telephone 0858 410510 for availability and order details or check out p101.

# ACE CHARTS

**Every month the unique ACE Charts rate games NOT according to sales, but according to the review marks they got in ALL British games mags...**

We give you TWO chart systems in ACE, so you can really sort out the treats from the turkeys. In this upper section we print the exclusive ACE charts – the only one's you can buy that rate games according to the review marks awarded in ALL available British games magazines. If a game makes it to the top here, it's HOT – though you should remember that all reviewers tend to disagree to some extent, so that just because a game gets top billing in the ACE charts doesn't necessarily mean we think it deserves it!

Below are the Gallup charts, based on sales. One anomaly to spot this month: Gods outselling Lemmings on the ST. Some people just don't read the reviews...

## IBM PC

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sim Earth | Ocean | 97.75 |
| F29 Retaliator | Ocean | 97 |
| Eye of the Beholder | SSI/US Gold | 96.5 |
| Supremacy | Virgin | 95.5 |
| Jet Fighter 2 | US Gold | 91.99 |

**The PC gets hot scores these days. With 95.5, Supremacy could have been number one on any other machine – here it's fourth!**

## AMIGA

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| IK+ | Hit Squad | 92.5 |
| Secret of Monkey Island | US Gold | 91.6 |
| F-15 Strike Eagle 2 | Microprose | 90.84 |
| Cybercon 3 | US Gold | 89.5 |
| Gods | Bitmap Brothers | 88.89 |

**Amiga budget software is clearly taken seriously: Rocket Ranger was number one two months ago – now IK+ hits the top...**

## ATARI ST

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lemmings | Psygnosis | 93.17 |
| Secret of Monkey Island | US Gold | 92.1 |
| 3D Construction Kit | Domark | 92 |
| Gods | Bitmap Brothers | 90.03 |
| Logical | Rainbow Arts | 88.88 |

**Not much around for the ST: Gods is here yet again and Lemmings/Monkey Island score almost identically to last month.**

# GALLUP CHARTS

**...and here's how they sold! Use the Gallup sales charts below to compare review marks with sales performance**

T

## IBM PC

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lemmings | Psygnosis | £34.99 |
| Colossus Chess X | CDS | £24.99 |
| Jet Fighter II | US Gold | £29.99 |
| Defender of the Crown | Mirror Image | £9.99 |
| F29 Retaliator | Ocean | £34.99 |

## AMIGA

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Eye of the Beholder | US Gold | £30.99 |
| Monkey Island | Lucasfilm/US Gold | £29.99 |
| Fantasy World Dizzy | Code Masters | £6.99 |
| K. Off Winning Tactics | Anco | £12.99 |
| PGA Tour Golf | Electronic Arts | £25.99 |

## ATARI ST

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Gods | Renegade | £25.55 |
| Fantasy World Dizzy | Code Masters | £6.99 |
| S Davis Wld Snooker | CDS | £9.99 |
| Lemmings | Psygnosis | £25.55 |
| Little Puff | Code Masters | £6.99 |

## THE STOCKMARKET

**In addition to our games charts, we also have a bit of fun with the figures each month when we produce the ACE Stockmarket. This is the list of the companies whose games are getting the highest review marks at the moment. Any software house that gets to the top of this Roll Of Honour has a right to crack open a bottle of champagne...**

**Each month, we calculate the average mark that each publisher received for every one of its games on each format. This is the rating that you see in the SCORE column. This month, the figure includes 8-bit games, but from next month it will be 16-bit ONLY! At present, however, 8-bit games are taken into account, so, for example, if the company is great at sourcing 16-bit games but botches up its 8-bit conversions, that will pull down the average mark, even if you can see one of its titles heading up the Amiga, ST or PC charts opposite. If all the games are excellent, or if the company has just one brilliant program doing the rounds at the moment, it will consequently have a high rating.**

**Although we print only the top 25 companies each month, we keep tabs on all of them. Occasionally a new company will enter the listings , in which case its name will be highlighted with an asterisk. This month, we welcome Gremlin's and Psygnosis's budget labels, GBH and Sizzlers, plus Team 17, to the ACE Stock Market.**

**Finally, we don't count companies which have only received a single solitary review,**

### How HOT were last month's games?

**The figure below is the average mark that ALL games got in reviews last month. This month the mark is down for the second time running – suggesting that software houses may be holding back their best titles for the autumn.**

**Software index: 73.7**

| PUBLISHER | SCORE |
|---|---|
| Ocean | 89.38 |
| Bitmap Brothers | 87.25 |
| Core Design | 87.07 |
| Activision | 86.44 |
| *Team 17 | 84.67 |
| Microprose | 84.5 |
| Psygnosis | 84.03 |
| Palace | 83.31 |
| Storm | 83 |
| Rainbow Arts | 82.58 |
| Dynamix | 82.33 |
| Rainbird | 81.89 |
| *GBH | 81.5 |
| Infocom/Mastertronic | 81 |
| Magnetic Scrolls | 80.56 |
| US Gold | 80.48 |
| *Sizzlers | 80 |
| Blade | 79.67 |
| Empire | 79 |
| Mindscape | 78.75 |
| Ubi Soft | 78.21 |
| Virgin | 75.9 |
| Krisalis | 75.66 |
| Electronic Arts | 75.57 |
| Hit Squad | 75.33 |

# WIN A PRIZE!

**If you can predict the entries in next month's ACE charts (NOT in the Gallup charts), you can win a free game for your machine. Here's how...**

### STEP ONE

Find a **postcard** – or write your entry on the **back of an envelope.** Enter your name and address, a daytime telephone number if you have one, the machine you own, your age, and the Round Number (in the box below).

### STEP TWO

Examine this month's charts. Then, using your knowledge of the games scene, try to predict which games will come top of the ACE charts next month. Finally, enter on your postcard:

- the top game for the IBM PC
- the top game for the Amiga
- the top game for the ST

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO ENTER A SUGGESTION FOR EVERY MACHINE!** But remember that your chances of winning may increase if you do.

### STEP THREE

You can also try to predict which company will be at the top of next month's Stockmarket listing (see this page). Enter on the card:
**'The top softco will be...**(name of company)'

### STEP FOUR

Post the card (WITH a stamp!) to us to arrive not later than the closing date for this round (24th July). The address is:

**ACE Stockmarket**
**30-32 Farringdon Lane**
**London**
**EC1R 3AU**

The first correct forecast for each chart taken out of the hat wins a prize. If you get more than one entry correct, you'll be entered in further draws for each category, thus increasing your chances of winning a prize. And don't forget to include the Round Number!

### THE RULES

- All entries must be received by July 24th 1991.
- No employees of EMAP, or of any company involved in the production, distribution, or sale of ACE Magazine are eligible for entry.
- Only one entry per household. Proof of posting not held as proof of delivery.
- We cannot undertake to deliver specific software titles as prizes, but rest assured that we will make every effort to ensure that the games get the adrenalin pumping!

### THIS IS
### *ROUND 21*

**Round 17 winners: Peter Till, P.A.Brown, Andrew Allen, Phil Maxfield, Jonathan Maxfield, Alistair Twible. The Maxfields picked up TWO jackpot prizes last month. The ACE committee are debating the issue of multiple entries. See next month for our decision....**

AMIGA, ATARI & PC SOFTWARE

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# HARD SELL

Once again, a rather truncated *Hard Sell* this month. Still, it should hopefully provide an at-a-glance comparison between computer and console. Still wondering what to go for in the great 'Console or Computer?' debate? Well, if you can afford one of each, our money's on the Amiga and Megadrive. But if you only go for one, get an Amiga. It's an excellent all-round performer that gives the best VFM.

## COMPUTERS

### ATARI STE

**Models:** Atari 520STE; 1040STE; Mega STs
**Package:** 520 and 1040 have keyboard with built-in disk drive; Mega versions have separate keyboard. Keep eyes peeled for current software bundles.
**Memory:** 520STE 512K; 1040STE 1Mb; Mega ST 1, 2 or 4Mb. All machines can be expanded internally to 4Mb.
**Processor:** 8-MHz Motorola 68000
**Recommended Retail Price:** 520STE £299; 1040STE £399
**Contact:** Atari PR (0753) 33344

#### IN BRIEF

Hard days for the machine that arguably started the avalanche to 16-bit computers. The STE boasts capabilities almost on par with its arch-rival the Amiga, but the Commodore machine seems to be the one most people want these days. As shame, because this is still a great general purpose home machine for games, small business and productivity, and thanks to its MIDI port is still the number one choice for MIDI musicians.

#### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** Low-res 320 x 200; medium res 640 x 200; high-res 640 x 400
**Palette:** 4096
**Colours:** Black and white in high-res; 4 colours in medium-res; 16 in low-res.
**TV:** Yes.
**Monitor Output:** RGB.
**Monitor Supplied:** No.
**Monitor Options:** Atari monitors SM124 high-res mono; SC1442 med res colour.
**Sprites:** No.
**Speed:** Fast
***NB** High resolution display is only available on monochrome monitor; medium and low res displays only available on colour monitors or TVs.*

#### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on monitor.
**MIDI:** Yes
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** Three 8-bit PCM stereo sound channels.

#### HARDWARE

**Disk Format:** 3.5 inch – 720K
**Disk Price:** Around £1.50
**Disk Performance:** Fast, reliable.
**Keyboard:** 96 keys including 10 functions keys. Has a cheap feel which can be improved with third party spring kits.
**Joystick/Mouse:** Two joystick ports are standard; two-button mouse is supplied with machine.

#### SOFTWARE

**Existing Software Base:** Excellent. The budget market provides a relatively cheap way of building up an impressive collection of software classics.
**Current Releases:** None of the major software houses ignore the ST so it is well served with plenty of good software.
**Games:** Across the board.
**Graphics:** Good with some excellent software to manipulate them.
**Music:** Excellent. Plenty of sound samplers, editors and MIDI software make this the musician's choice.
**Prospects:** Very good, but the Amiga is currently the favourite with software houses in the UK and the chances of a sudden boom of interest in the ST Stateside look very slim.
**Software Loading:** No problems at all. The STE's drive is fast and friendly to the ear. Be warned that some companies still release games on two or more single-sided discs (a hang on from the old days when the ST had single-sided drives) which can mean unnecessary and annoying bouts of disc swapping.

#### BUYLINES

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP.
**Second Hand Availability:** Very common and quite cheap. Beware very old, single sided ST machines.
**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee. Return to dealer if faulty

### COMMODORE AMIGA

**Models:** Amiga A500; A1500; A2000; A3000
**Package:** A500 has keyboard and built-in drive with separate PSU; A1500 and A2000 have separate keyboard with built-in (fan assisted) PSU. A3000 is a very powerful machine indeed.
**Memory:** A500 512K; A1500 & A2000 1Mb; A3000 2Mb.
**Processor:** 500/1500/2000 7.15 MHZ Motorola 68000; A3000 16 or 25MHz Motorola 68030,
**Recommended Retail Price:** A500 £NA; Screen Gems £399.99; Flight of Fantasy Pack £399.99; Class Of The 90s pack £579.99 (all packs inc A500); A1500 from £999; A2000 from £1199(for 1Mb+20Mb hard disk); A3000 from £3160(for 2Mb+40Mb hard disk). (All prices inc VAT).
**Contact:** Commodore (0628) 770088

#### IN BRIEF

A stunning specification with custom chips to rival almost everything around, the Amiga is the first choice for the most exigent of games players and video professionals. After an initially shaky start the machine continues to sell extremely well and has overtaken the ST in the UK, though the latter machine still has a slightly larger installed base. The A1500 is near-identical spec-wise to the A2000, but cheaper. The A3000 is a top-end workstation substitute; includes *Workbench 2*, featuring enhanced icons, file handling, and security features plus *Amiga Vision*, a multi-media programming tool. A3000 also comes in three configurations, ranging from a 16MHz/40Mb hard disk to a 25MHz/100Mb disc.

#### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** From 320 x 200 to 640 x 400 (more possible in software)
**Palette:** 4096
**Colours:** 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64 or 4096
**TV:** With modulator.
**Monitor Output:** SCART + composite video in monochrome.
**Monitor Supplied:** No
**Monitor Options:** C1084 £349.99
**Sprites:** 16 in hardware + unlimited BOBS from soft/hardware.
**Speed:** Very fast with good software.

#### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on monitor.
**MIDI:** No. Third party interfaces available.
**Stereo Output:** 2 phono connectors.
**Performance:** Among the best around. Custom hardware squeezes 9 octaves of 8-bit digital sound into the four channels.

#### HARDWARE

**Disk Format:** 3.5inch – 837K; A3000 40/100Mbyte hard disk formatted.
**Disk Price:** Around £1.50.
**Disk Performance:** Noisy and sluggish. Third party software is available to improve matters.
**Keyboard:** 94 keys. 10 function keys and separate cursor cluster.
**Joystick/Mouse:** Two-button mouse supplied as standard.
**Interfaces:** Two Joystick/mouse; stereo audio; external disk drive(s); RS232 serial; Centronics parallel printer; SCART RGB/video; composite monochrome video; expansion bus (internal on A1500 & A2000; 32-bit on A3000); clock/memory expansion on A500 only; internal PC expansion on A1500, A2000 and A3000.

#### SOFTWARE

**Existing Software Base:** Similar to the ST.
**Current Releases:** Everyone's doing them.
**Games:** Something for everyone.
**Graphics:** Quality and range is unsurpassed.
**Music:** Needs better support for MIDI. Internal sound software is well supported thanks to IFF standards.
**Prospects:** Excellent.
**Software Loading:** Noisy but usually reliable. Plagued by viruses.

#### BUYLINES

**Best Buy Price:** Old Amiga 1000s can be picked up cheaply enough but these lacked the extra graphics modes of later models. Try to find a good value pack.
**Second Hand Availability:** Becoming common. Best buys are late Amiga 500s with Kickstart 1.2.
**Maintenance:** One years guarantee. Return faulty machines to dealers.

### IBM PC

**Model:** IBM's PC was the first PC to be accepted in large quantities (not the first PC) and remains the standard by which all others are judged. There are hundreds of clones and variations including offerings from Amstrad, Atari and Commodore. In general, with PCs you pay for speed and better graphics standards. The extra money is worth it if you can afford it.
**Package:** Depends on the manufacturer although most are supplied with monitors. They can even be bought in kit form at no extra saving
**Memory:** Usually 512K or 640K. Can be anything from 64K to 1Mb+. Always go for a 640K model.
**Processor:** Intel 8088/8086 in base machine is sometimes replaces with the faster NEC V20/30. More expensive machines are based on Intel's much faster 286, 386SX, 386 and even the latest 486.
**Recommended Retail Price:** Can be picked up for as little as £299 for a "no frills" machine. With top-of-the-range 486 based clones – and the official IBM versions – the sky's the limit. Look for a good EGA or VGA model for between £750 and £1200.

#### IN BRIEF

Superb value if you want the ultimate all-rounder, the PC still betrays its business origins. Almost every major software house now port their titles to the PC but these remain limited by the constraints of the basic (most common) machines – which means they tend to be limited in sound and graphics. Definitely NOT first choice if entertainment is your preferred use for computers, or if you cannot afford the better EGA or VGA models (which are really essential for good games playing).

### GRAPHICS

The first PCs weren't fitted with graphics as standard but most clones incorporate the necessary hardware and come with a monitor. There are three main standards: CGA – a nasty but all to common colour display, EGA about the lowest colour display worth considering, VGA - an Amiga/ST beating display; and Hercules monochrome. EGA or VGA which are usually only fitted as standard to more expensive machines (Amstrad's PC2086 is one exception).
**Resolution:** CGA 320 x 200; EGA 640 x 350; Hercules 720 x 384; VGA 800 x 600.
**Palette:** CGA 8 (in two fixed sets); EGA 64; VGA 256
**Colours:** CGA 4; EGA 16; VGA 64; Hercules 2
**Monitor Output:** TTL RGB/RGBI (CGA); analogue RGB (E/VGA)
**Monitor Options:** Vast. Many monitors are dedicated to just one or two modes – some have amber, green or white monochrome displays – check before buying.
**Sprites:** None
**Speed:** From very slow - 8088 - to very fast - 80486

### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Built-in sound is very poor. Third-party add-on sound boards such Roland (£380) and Ad-Lib (£150) - which is fast becoming a standard - provide synthesiser-quality sound through an amplifier.
**MIDI:** Third part interfaces available.
**Stereo Output:** With boards, yes.
**Performance:** Not the ideal machine for the musically bent – an Atari ST offers more for MIDI, the Amiga more for software sound purists.

### HARDWARE

**Disk Format:** 5.25in –180/360K/1.2Mb; 3.5in 720K/1.44Mb
**Disk Price:** 60p – £3.00
**Disk Performance:** Average. Most PC owners also buy hard disks. A large amount of PC applications software refuses to work unless you have a hard disk.
**Keyboard:** Almost as many variations as there are clones. Prefer the AT or extended AT layouts to the XT layout since it easier to use.
**Joystick/Mouse:** Neither supplied as standard. The better clones include a mouse or at least a mouse port, especially since IBM's WIMP system (*Windows*) has become more popular.

### SOFTWARE

**Existing Software Base:** Vast!
**Current Releases:** All major software houses now produce something for the PC , with many now supporting the superior E/VGA modes.
**Games:** Most of the best Amiga /ST titles appear on the PC eventually.
**Graphics:** Given the right graphics adaptor, the PC has nice graphics and the software is usually excellent. On a standard CGA PC the graphics stink no matter how good the software is.
**Music:** Unexpanded it's pathetic. However, add-on boards offer some of the best sound you'll hear on a home computer.
**Prospects:** The PC is the eternal champion – as others fall by the wayside it carries on getting faster and better all the time. This is aided by Intel constantly improving the machine's processor and the vast user base demanding better equipment.
**Software Loading:** Fast and reliable; very fast from hard disk.

### BUYLINES

**Best Buy Price:** Watch out for package deals form large chains and mail order companies. If you don't know too much about PCs go for a name you know.
**Second Hand Availability:** Common but be careful you do not get a clapped out monitor/keyboard.
**Maintenance:** Usually one year's guarantee – but competition has forced the price of maintenance contracts down to an affordable level. This often means they fix in-situ free.

# CONSOLES

## ATARI LYNX

**Package:** Lynx. Pay extra for peripherals and inclusive *California Games*.
**Processor:** 16-MHz 6502
**Console Memory:** 64K
**Recommended Retail Price:** £79.99 (£99.99 with peripherals; £129.99 with peripherals and game).
**Contact:** Atari PR (071-388) 9871

### IN BRIEF

Designed by the man behind the Amiga, the Lynx is an amazing handheld. After a shaky start, the Lynx is doing fine and - if the rumours are to be believed - is starting to take off in the States. Its most obvious competitor, the Gamegear, lacks the Lynx's frills, but makes up for it with smaller unit size and TV adaptor.

### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** 160 x 102
**Palette:** 4096
**Colours:** 16
**TV:** No
**Monitor Output:** No
**Monitor Supplied:** Yes - 3.5" back-lit colour LCD
**Monitor Options:** None
**Sprites:** Special graphics hardware effectively treats ALL screen objects as sprites!
**Speed:** Fast

### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Very good
**MIDI:** No
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** Four-channel, five octave stereo sound has to be heard to be believed.

### HARDWARE

**Joystick:** Eight-way joypad.
**Ports:** Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack.

### SOFTWARE

**Price:** £30-35.
**Cartridge Memory:** 8Mb
**Existing Software Base:** Very small.
**Current Releases:** *California Games* is a great 'freebie'.
**Prospects:** Uncertain but several new titles in the pipeline.

### BUYLINES

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP
**Second Hand Availability:** Very few
**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee.

### STAR RATINGS

**Graphics:** ★★★★★
**Sound:** ★★★★★
**Expansion:** ★
**Overall:** ★★★★

## NINTENDO GAMEBOY

**Package:** Main unit with *Tetris* game.
**Processor:** 1-MHz customised 8-bit Z80A.
**Console Memory:** 8K
**Recommended Retail Price:** £69.99.
**Contact:** Deighton PR (071-836) 2973

### IN BRIEF

Nintendo were the first company to produce a dedicated handheld console and now it seems everyone wants to get in on the act. On reflection even the Game Boy was a long time coming since the technology employed by the display is starting to look dated. Not to be dismissed simply because of mono graphics – this machine has some superb titles and games making use of the two-player link-up option are tremendous fun (especially the superb freebie *Tetris*).

### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** 20 x 18 characters.
**Colours:** 4 grey shades.
**Monitor Supplied:** Yes - LCD display is lit by ambient light.
**Sprites:** 40 8 x 8 pixel blocks..
**Speed:** Fast for what it is.

### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on headphones.
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** Plays a lot better than it looks.

### HARDWARE

**Joystick:** Built-in 8-way joypad.
**Ports:** Headphone socket;dual-machine interface.

### SOFTWARE

**Price:** £20-25.
**Cartridge Memory:** 64K
**Existing Software Base:** The best for any handheld.
**Current Releases:** Increasing
**Prospects:** Excellent

### BUYLINES

**Best Buy Price:** As RRP
**Second Hand Avail.:** Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.
**Maintenance:** One year's warranty

### STAR RATINGS

**Graphics:** ★★★
**Sound:** ★★★★
**Expansion:** ★★
**Overall:** ★★★★★

## NINTENDO SUPER FAMICOM

**Package:** Console unit, controller unit and *Super Mario World*.
**Processor:** 3.58 MHz 65C816.
**Console Memory:** Not known
**Recommended Retail Price:** N/A (Japan price = £100)
**Contact:** Local dealers

### IN BRIEF

With the weight of all-powerful Nintendo behind it, the Famicom can hardly fail. Although not hugely superior to the Sega Megadrive technically, it's the games that impress - notably the bundled *Mario World* (which will no doubt help sales no end) and *F-Zero*. That said, there are some real duffers amongst the gems (*Big Run*, anyone?), but it's still early days yet. The Super Famicom's enormous games potential has barely been scratched.

### GRAPHICS

**Resolution:** 512 x 512..
**Palette:** 32,768
**Colours:** 256
**TV:** Yes
**Monitor Output:** Yes
**Monitor Supplied:** No
**Monitor Options:** RGB, SCART
**Sprites:** 128.
**Speed:** Remarkable

### SOUND

**Speaker Quality:** Depends on TV/monitor
**MIDI:** No
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** 8 Channel custom 16-bit PCM/digital.

### HARDWARE

**Joystick:** Supplied.

**Ports:** One big expansion port.
**SOFTWARE**
**Price:** £40-50.
**Cartridge Memory:** 16 Mb..
**Existing Software Base:** Small.
**Current Releases:** Lots, and plenty more planned.
**Prospects:** How can it fail? Back orders were in the millions before it was launched.

**BUYLINES**
**Best Buy Price:** Grey import.
**Second Hand Availability:** None as yet.
**Maintenance:** Take care- grey imports are rarely under warranty.

**STAR RATINGS**
Graphics: ★★★★★
Sound: ★★★★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★★★

## SEGA GAMEGEAR

**Package:** Gamegear unit.
**Processor:** 3.58-MHz Z80A
**Console Memory:** 8K RAM/16K Video RAM.
**Recommended Retail Price:** £99.99
**Contact:** Sega (071-727) 8070

**IN BRIEF**
Opinion used to be that the Gamegear was going to be the handsdown winner in the battle of the colour handhelds. But times - and, more importantly, prices - have changed. The Lynx, a technically superior machine with some fine games available for it. has had its price slashed and - if US sources are correct - is enjoying a sudden upswing in support from American consumers. In the Gamegear's favour are the clout of mighty Sega and the potential to turn the unit into a portable TV via a cheap adaptor (around £50 is current estimate). But at the moment, it's anybody's game.

**GRAPHICS**
**Resolution:** 160 x 146
**Palette:** 4096
**Colours:** 16
**TV:** No.
**Monitor Output:** No.
**Monitor Supplied:** Yes - 3.2" back-lit colour LCD.
**Monitor Options:** None.
**Sprites:** Not known.
**Speed:** Okay.
**SOUND**
**Speaker Quality:** Good.
**MIDI:** No
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** Three-channel PSG sound channels + noise channel.

**HARDWARE**
**Joystick:** Eight-way joypad.
**Ports:** Cartridge port; multi-player port; miniature stereo headphone jack; TV tuner port.
**SOFTWARE**
**Price:** Around £20-25
**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.
**Existing Software Base:** Small.
**Current Releases:** Few as yet, but lots in the pipeline.
**Prospects:** Very good.

**BUYLINES**
**Best Buy Price:** As RRP.
**Second Hand Availability:** None as yet.
**Maintenance:** One year's guarantee

**STAR RATINGS**
Graphics: ★★★★
Sound: ★★★★
Expansion: ★★★★
Overall: ★★★★

## SEGA MEGADRIVE

**Package:** Console unit, controller, and *Mickey Mouse or Moonwalker* game.
**Processor:** 8-MHz 68000 + Z80B
**Console Memory:** 74K main, 64K video.
**Recommended Retail Price:** £149.99.
**Contact:** Virgin Mastertronic (071-727) 8070

**IN BRIEF**
Excellent example of the new 16-bit console technologies. The first decent 16-bit console to receive official support in the UK.

**GRAPHICS**
**Resolution:** 320 x 224
**Palette:** 512
**Colours:** 64
**TV:** Yes
**Monitor:** No
**Sprites:** 80
**Speed:** Very fast
**SOUND**
**Speaker Quality:** N/A
**MIDI:** No
**Stereo Output:** Yes
**Performance:** 12 channel stereo sound is produced by a custom FM chip and sounds fantastic.

**HARDWARE**
**Joystick:** Dedicated controller supplied.
**SOFTWARE**
**Price:** £30-50 (typically £35).
**Cartridge Memory:** Not known.
**Existing Software Base:** Good
**Current Releases:** Lots.
**Prospects:** Very good.

**BUYLINES**
**Best Buy Price:** As RRP
**Second Hand Avail.:** Some companies (e.g. Console Quest) do 'em.
**Maintenance:** One year on UK machines.

**STAR RATINGS**
**Graphics:** ★★★★★
**Sound:** ★★★★★
**Expansion:** ★★★
**Overall:** ★★★★★

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# SHOP WATCH

## Software seller Dirk Longhorn fires his lasers at CDTV and game licenses...

Ot the time of writing the CDTV has actually been on sale in independent computer shops for almost two months; curiously it has yet to make an appearance in any of the multiples so far, perhaps a case of cold feet at the last minute? So how are people reacting to it? Well, the under-twelves usually put on their 'Cor! Look at the graphics on that!' expressions and the 'techies' are as enthusiastic as we expected them to be, but the 'man in the street' – whom Commodore are desperately trying to interest in this machine – is taking a very cool approach. We have sold five machines so far, all to techies, who need no selling to. Demonstrations to them are a waste of time – they already know as much about the machine as the people who designed it, but demonstrating the CDTV to the aforementioned 'man in the street' can be a little disheartening, at least so far.

Typical comments include: "...it's something and nothing really", "...it's a lot of money for an encyclopaedia," and, more commonly, "...so I buy this for six hundred pounds THEN I have to buy a TV THEN I have to put it through my hi-fi and THEN I've got to buy the discs at thirty-odd quid each?".

Commodore are certainly forcing us to emphasise the diverse range of titles available for the CDTV, albeit by default; so far the disks include The Illustrated Works of Shakespeare, The New Basics Electronic Cookbook, Garden FAx – How to grow and care for over 200 varieties of house plants', some colouring books, some music play-along packages, two appalling titles called Psycho Killer and Women In Motion, and a few games...

Ah yes, the games. The initial releases have been somewhat underwhelming. Classic Board Games, Defender of the Crown (only difference being the soundtrack – the game is as simplistic as ever), Battle Storm (a shoot-em-up from Titus), and a revamped – I hesitate to say enhanced, the screen layout is somewhat confusing – version of Sim City.

I feel that Commodore should be putting more emphasis on the games element of the machine and encouraging publishers to produce titles that will cause jaws to drop in the same way that Defender of the Crown did on the Amiga back in 1986. Perhaps they should get in touch with Microprose, whose simulations would be perfect for the enhanced graphic and sonic treatment? virgin also possess some esoteric titles that would benefit through the move to CDTV, such as Scrabble, Diplomacy, Risk, and Monopoly.

I realise that at present it's very much a 'toe in the water' period for Commodore and that their big guns will probably be wheeled out for what is quaintly referred to as 'the season' from September onwards but please guys, don't leave it too late, eh? The potential market for CDTV is huge, but people need to be convinced that it will enhance their lives in the way the Commodore claim – and the only way to to that is to produce software that people have 'just got to have'.

As a footnote, one chap I spent time with demonstrating the CDTV to said at the end: 'It's very nice and all that, but why didn't they just produce a better computer?

### SANTA CALLS

It's around this time of year when us retailers start getting advance product information for the forthcoming Christmas releases. As usual what we have seen so far tends to be a mixture of film tie-ins, coin-ops and character licenses (such as The Simpsons – Christmas number 1, anyone?).

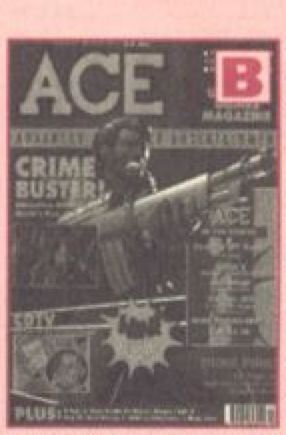
Wouldn't it be a pleasant surprise if, this year, as much thought went into the game design as the design on the box for these film and character tie-ins? Ocean in particular are guilty of this with Robocop, the Untouchables, Robocop 2, Navy Seals, Total Recall, and now Darkman having game play so similar that if the sprites were changed the player would have difficulty knowing which game he was playing.

### GAME GEAR

The Game Gear should hit the shops any day now – combining the enhanced features of the Lynx with the size of the Game Boy must surely make this the one most people will go for. With the promise of a TV tuner available by Christmas, there must be some worried people at Nintendo and Atari. Whatever happens, handhelds look like taking a very large slice of that Xmas pud-

# BACK ISSUES

## Here's a checklist of topics covered in some of our older issues – for a complete list of available issues, telephone 0858 410510 for more information...



Back issues are available for all issues from ACE 4 inclusive (except ACE 11) at the giveaway price of £2.50 each in the UK and £3.50 each for overseas. These prices include post and packaging (surface mail). Overseas readers wanting airmail delivery should enquire as to the cost at the address below, listing the issues required.

To order, clearly list the required issue numbers and send them, along with your full name and address and a cheque or postal order for the full payment made payable to ACE magazine, to: **ACE Back Issues, PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 6AA.**

- **ASAT (AVIONICS SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TRAINER)**, combat flight simulator for the US Air Force by Perceptronics. Uses Falcon software by Spectrum Holobyte/Mirrorsoft. Features include: networking for multi-player action, tactile feedback and fingertip weapon selection. [ACE14]
- **BATMAN DIGITAL JUSTICE** is the world's first interactive hypercomic by Pepe Moreno. "Digital is the art medium of the future." [ACE30]
- **BATTLETECH**, "the world's first complete computer simulation for play", featuring multi-player cockpits equipped with 40Mhz 16 million colour graphics processors, stereo spatial sound and life-like controls as you command 31st century Mechs. [ACE28]
- **CD-I** (Compact Disc Interactive) is destined to become the entertainment and education medium of the 90's. [ACE9/21/22/24/32/33/35]. Check out Issue 30 for multi-media principles (hypermedia in particular) and issue 24 for a preview of the Philips CD-I system.
- **CDTV**, Commodore's attempt to bring multimedia to the mass-market. An Amiga with built-in CD-ROM drive and CD-audio capability, redesigned to look like a VCR. [ACE34]
- **COSMIC OSMO**, the world's first hypergame - courtesy of Cyan Software/Activision. Check out issue 23 for the first review, issue 24 for a feature on hypergames, and issue 30 for general hypermdia coverage. New Osmo CD-ROM version featured in issue 36.
- **FLARE TECHNOLOGY**, trio of talented Cambridge-based games hardware engineers. Their custom-designed Flare One micro formed the basis of the Konix console. [ACE11]
- **FUJITSU FM TOWNS**, a 32-bit 16 million colour computer with built-in CD-ROM drive. If you bought ACE 31 you could have won one! [ACE27]
- **HYPERGAMES** like Cosmic Osmo and Batman Digital Justice are paving the way for CD-I entertainment. [ACE24/30]
- **INTERACTIVE VIDEO TAPE**, an alternative to CD-I. [ACE26]
- **KONIX CONSOLE**, a powerful British console with revolutionary built-in joystick controller which could change into a steering wheel, motorbike handle or aeroplane yoke. Ultimately failed due to a lack of marketing money. Rumours suggest a new buyer is interested. [ACE18/25]
- **LIGHTSPEED SPRITES**, three researchers from Carnegie Mellon University, USA have developed an algorithm enabling them to generate graphical simulations of objects seen travelling at 99% of the speed of light. [ACE34]
- **MEDIA LAB**, Boston-based research institute with one simple brief - invent the future. People at this Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) facility are working on computer generated holograms, interactive computer newspapers and virtual reality man-machine interfaces. [ACE9]
- **NEO-GEO**, the arcade-based games console from SNK in Japan, with storage capacity for 64Mb games cartridges and IC card capability. [ACE32/34]
- **RENDERMAN**, the unique 3D graphics system by Pixar which creates polygons with photorealistic detail. [ACE35]

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## To YOUR micro...

**Monthly machine specific columns for the users of the seven most popular machines, written from a personal viewpoint by other users...**

## SEGA MEGADRIVE

Why is everybody going CD crazy? Now the Megadrive is the latest machine to fail victim to the hype of CD-ROM entertainment. What do I mean? Very few software developers are working on games that live up to the promise of compact disc intertainment. Most publishers are simply dumping old software titles on a new format. Sure, the sound is far superior and some also include fancy intro sequences but we've been promised far more than this by almost everybody involved in CD projects.

The 'next generation of gaming' seems to be plagued by delays, technical difficulties and confusion over CD-ROM standards and the issue of full-screen full-motion video. CDi, for instance, has been talked about for over five years and there still isn't a product out on the streets.

Today, possibly the only truly innovative CD-ROM software available are the multimedia encyclopaedias and other forms of edutainment released on the PC and Mac - players would prefer great shoot'em-ups, expansive RPG's and life-like simulations. Perhaps Sega has a few tricks up its sleeve?

Tom Kalinske, CEO of Sega in America, says the games on the Mega-CD will give 'thousands of hours of more challenging gameplay'. He adds: "The new advanced CD-ROM accessory will forever change the way video games are played."

Sega has released very little technical detail about either the Mega-CD hardware or software under development. Kalinske hints that the Mega-CD includes a couple of other 'breakthrough features not currently offered by anyone else'.

Don't get too excited just yet, though. Sega's Mega-CD system could take over a year to arrive on British shores. I hope the games will make up for any frustrating delays.

Japanese game designers are on a roll at the moment. After the triumph of *Sonic the Hedgehog* (reviewed on page 54), Sega was touting another exciting Megadrive release at Chicago's mammoth CES trade exhibition last month. The strangely titled *Toe Jam & Earl* is an attempt to inject more humour into video games.

Like *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Mickey Mouse and the Castle of Illusion*, *Toe Jam & Earl* has better graphics and sound, longer gameplay with more challenging levels, and faster speed than previous Megadrive carts.

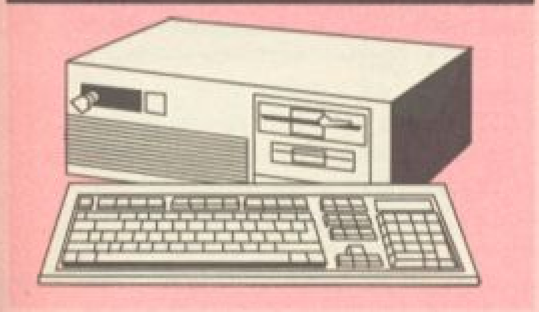
*Toe Jam & Earl* are two "hip hoppin' smooth rappin' aliens from the planet Funkatron". These connoisseurs of pop culture and the finest of junk foods are stranded on the strangest planet in our solar system... Earth!

The idea of the game is to find parts of Jam & Earl's shattered Righteous Rapmaster Rocket Ship while avoiding Nerd Herds, obsessive Mad Dentists and the love-inducing Cupid. To help your adventure along you can pick-up spring shoes, rocket skates and tomato sling shots to beat these fearsome foes. As the name suggests, there is also a split-screen two-player option for double the fun.

Sega describes *Toe Jam & Earl* as a wild hybrid mix of adventure, role-play, rap, hip hop and other street sensibilities. This 'breath of fresh video game air' will be released in a matter of months. Have you got what it takes to become a Supreme Funk Lord?

● **Masaharu Harada**

## IBM PC



They may produce some of the best PC games software around, but the people at Origin sure are a strange bunch. With the likes of *Ultima VII*, *Wing Commander II* and *Strike Commander*, we can forgive these little idiosyncrasies. At the end of the day it's the games that count, right? Nevertheless, these eccentric habits and hobbies do make interesting gossip.

Take Richard Garriott, co-founder of Origin and creator of the *Ultima* saga, as an example. The guy is a millionaire who hasn't really grown up yet. So you think I'm joking, eh? Most people don't have their own personal observatories built into the roof of their house. Garriott has one with a turbo telescope which can read a newspaper over 15 miles away. Not many people spend $50,000 turning their homes into 'Spook Houses' on Halloween to scare the local townsfolk. Garriott does - when he's not busy finishing an *Ultima* game. Garriott also likes fencing and collects scientific antiques and magical artifacts. Face it, he calls himself Lord British! Garriott's not the only odd-ball working for Origin, either.

Bill Johnson, 'The Guardian' in the soon-to-be-released *Ultima VII*, is a local Austin actor who enjoys a cult fan following for his role as Leatherface in The *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*. He also teaches acting and voice in Austin and can frequently be seen there on the stage.

Born in Yugoslavia, Nenad Vugrinec produces environmental sound effects for Origin games. Additionally, he's a performance artist on keyboards and programs synthesizers and sequencers for rock bands.

Even an ex-Brit has gone 'goofy' while working for Origin. Chris Roberts, the central character behind *Wing Commander*, *Times of Lore* and *Strike Commander*, has acquired an expensive fetish for fast cars. Roberts is so far gone, he insists on importing the tires for his beloved Porsche from Germany. Those American alternatives just don't have the grip needed for his fast speed journeys around the hills of Austin.

Mind you, if you're a bit on the wacky side and a darn good 68000 programmer, Origin would like to hear from you. Contact ACE if you're interested.

Let me know if a bunch of weirdo's work at your development company or software house and I'll pass the info on. You know it's only a bit of fun! Next month I will be bringing you the dirt on Digital Image Design, the team responsible for Ocean's marvellous *F-29 Retaliator*, the odd car-wreck and an unnerving story after visiting New York...

Designers of fantasy role-play adventure games have finally caught onto the fact that games can have excellent graphics and audio without sacrificing the gameplay.

New World Computing has radically improved the sights and sounds of its *Might & Magic* saga with the release of the third game in the series. *Isles of Terra* has thousands of illustrated inhabitants, places and things created by some top animators, while speech and screams add yet another element to playing the game.

In *Might & Magic III*, you lead a party of hand-picked adventurers to a rendezvous with the legendary wizard Corak as you seek to foil the genocidal schemes of your arch-rival Sheltem. From dark dungeons, through corridors of stone and timber, and onward to the frozen peaks of Terra you will meet many bizarre creatures and uncover the mysteries that surround the exotic islands in the Great Sea. New World Computing says the game is a 'swashbuckling adventure of heroism and wizardry' that will keep you riveted for hours and hours. An automatic help is available to show you the way when you're stuck and experience with previous *Might & Magic*'s is not required.

*Isles of Terra* requires a hard drive and is compatible with all the major graphics and sound cards. Call European distributor US Gold (021-625-3366) for further details.

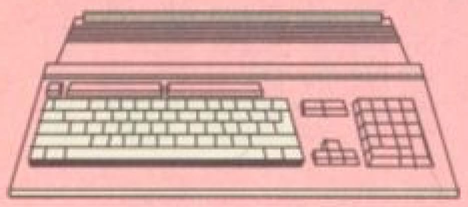
### TAME THE GAME

Do you wish to increase your Mayoral Efficiency Quotient and Recreational Ecstasy Plateau in *SimCity*?

For best results, keep your tax rate between 5% and 7%. Any higher, and growth will slow or stop. Any lower and you won't have enough tax revenues to maintain the city. The only way to end traffic congestion is to replace all roads with mass transit. When the people ask for more roads, ignore them. They just want to cruise down Main Street in their polluting monster machines. They're a very vocal minority, but don't have enough votes to damage your popularity as a mayor. Bulldozing shorelines prevents flooding, but lowers shoreline property values. You win sim, you lose sim.

● **Rik Haynes**

# AMIGA



Incentive's *Freescape* game design system, as used in classics like *Darkside* and *Castle Master*, is the closest we've yet seen to 'virtual reality' in home computer games. Using filled polygons as the basis of complex 3-D structures, *Freescape* games allow you to move around, though and into apparently solid objects, viewing them from any direction and where necessary interacting with them; opening doors, shooting targets and so on.

Now the programming principles behind *Freescape* have been harnessed in the 3-D Construction Kit, one of the most impressive programs ever for the Amiga.

While the Kit is also available for the Atari ST, IBM-PC compatibles and even eight-bit machines, it's on the Amiga that it achieves its most impressive performance. Costing £49.99, it comes complete with a presentation case containing a single disk, thick manual, and an instructional VHS videotape featuring Incentive boss Ian Andrew demonstrating the basics of the program.

The difference between *Freescape* and the *3-D Construction Kit*, which features *Freescape II*, is that here you can construct your own world before creating a game, design routine or any other kind of interactive environment around it - though the main purpose of the program is to create game-worlds, the Kit also has applications in CAD, education, art and video.

The program uses both pull-down menus and on-screen control buttons which offer shortcuts to certain functions. Library files include preset backgrounds and objects including a house complete with garden path, fences, and a fully furnished interior; a wicked-looking racing car; and a gigantic and detailed space shuttle.

Loading and playing the demo game gives you some idea of the potential of the *Kit*; not only can you move around, through and into the animated buildings, objects and vehicles on-screen, you can also interact with them, moving, shooting or clambering over them.

Designing your own world is a more laborious process, but once you've got the hang of it, you can build up libraries of objects which make it quicker in future.

The principle lies in combining simple preset polygonal shapes - cubes, squares, rectangles and so on - which are selected from the Create Object page of the on-screen menu. Shapes can then be edited - stretched, squashed, rotated, copied and combined - to create finished objects such as buildings, vehicles, trees and even beings. Controls on the main panel allow you to view objects from any angle, and to isolate them from the background.

You can choose any colours you want for your objects, colouring opposite sides to give an illusion of different light sources, place them anywhere within the confines of the game 'world', choose your own colours for the background sky and earth, and add borders and control panels created using other IFF file-compatible graphics packages.

The complex part lies in adding attributes to these objects; animated sections, opening doors, exploding objects and so on. Creating these conditions, which control which game area you move to when you pass through a door, whether objects explode when you shoot them, when sound effects appear and so on, requires the use of a special programming language. Fortunately it's a logical BASIC-style language controlled using a full text editor function, and as such shouldn't present much difficulty to anyone with a smattering of programming knowledge.

Sets of conditions such as the starting point, the player's ability to climb objects, the distance you are allowed to 'fall' without harming yourself, playing controls, score displays and so on, can be saved as part of the game file, and if you like you can imported your own 'control panel' graphics to complete the game, then define the control points on the screen which when clicked on will cause your viewpoint to move around.

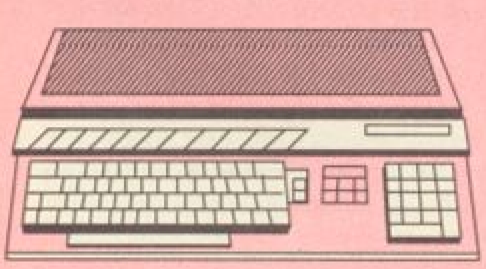
Games can be saved in a file format which can run as a freestanding program (so Amiga owners who don't have *3-D Construction Kit* can still play the games you create). I'm sure it won't be long before *Kit*-created games appear on the open market.

Registered users can use a telephone helpline, but if you want to join the User Group and get bi-monthly newsletters it will cost you £12.

The potential of the *3-D Construction Kit* for game-makers and players is terrific, but don't expect quick and easy results; a really absorbing game requires as much inspiration as perspiration.

● **Chris Jenkins**

# ATARI ST



Have you got a spare £400 to spend? If the answer is yes, Atari is hoping you'll be interested in a new add-on CD-ROM drive for your ST.

The device is due to be officially unveiled next month at the Atari Messe Show in Dusseldorf, Germany. Details concerning the technical specifications of this peripheral are sketchy at present. Atari will start talking about this and the impending CD software nearer the launch. Speaking to the trade press, Atari's North American President Sam Tramiel, in typical fashion, has compared the CDTV to a Trojan horse.

Frankly, I think the whole concept of a CD drive for the ST is too little, too late. I just wish Atari would get it's act together, stop announcing odd-ball products like the Panther video games console and start promoting the value-for-money ST as the best 16-bit computer for playing games. The Amiga may have slightly better capabilities, but most games fail to take proper advantage of any superiority. In fact, many programmers prefer to code on the ST because of the cleaner crash-free operating system. Do you like playing flight simulations or any other games using 3D graphics? This type of software actually runs faster on the wee Atari beastie. Enough said?

Better known for producing Public Domain software and introducing the concept of Licenseware, Budgie UK is soon to introduce its first full-price game. *Football Challenge* (£19.95) is a multiple-choice trivia quiz game with over 2000 questions evenly divided between football-related and general knowledge topics. Update disks, costing £9.95 a piece, are already in production. These datadisks will each contain another 2000 questions on a number of different subjects. A spokesperson for Budgie UK stressed the educational value of *Football Challenge* doesn't effect the fun of playing the game. For more information contact Budgie UK at 5 Minister Close, Rayleigh, Essex.

Club M, a rare user group for monochrome ST users, is looking for new blood. Organisers say 'dedication, enthusiasm and a sense of humour' are the only membership fees. In addition, the crew is nurturing a small, but ever expanding, PD library which even includes a few black&white games. Write to: Club M, 59 Maple House, Idonia Street, London SE8.

### TAME THE GAME

Special thanks to Leslie Rayner in Sudbury, Suffolk for this handy playing guide to Level One of *Metal Mutants*:

**Screen 1** - There is a rock-dragon called an Ejabamus. Use the tank and fire a torpedo to dispatch it.

**Screen 2** - Empty.

**Screen 3** - Pick up cyborg's fighting hatchet power-up.

**Screens 4/5** - Use dinos and the crunch weapon a couple of times to kill trident-carrying lizards.

**Screen 6** - Kill the flying lizards with cyborg's hatchet.

**Screen 7** - Switch between cyborg/dinos to kill lizards.

**Screen 8** - Is the regeneration unit. Use cyborg and select the bottom corner joystick position opposite to the direction you're facing. Regeneration is automatic.

**Screen 9** - Walk across quicksand pit until cyborg is about head high. Use jump to reach the other side.

**Screens 10/11** - Use dinos and the flame-thrower to kill the swarms and tank to destroy the nests.

**Screen 11** there is a Jupiter Alpha lightning power-up hidden amongst the nests. Use tank to fire and reveal it.

**Screen 12** - Just a wreck of an imperial cargo.

**Screen 13** - Contains a magnetic grapple power-up.

**Screen 14** - Has another rock-dragon called Mudelmus. Use cyborg and hatchet to kill it with about ten strikes.

**Screens 15/16** - Use cyborg to walk to the edge of the islands and then jump over the quicksand.

**Screen 17** - Walk to the edge of the island without entering the quicksand and jump. You will start to sink. Now use the magnetic grapple to haul yourself out.

**Screens 18/19** - Switch between cyborg/dinos to fight the lizards. If you have time, use the lightning weapon.

**Screen 20** - Use dinos to kill the lizard king.

**Screen 21** - Another regeneration unit. Use the same procedure as you did before.

**Screens 22/23** - Use cyborg and time your jump so that you land on lizard's back. On **Screen 23**, time the jump so that you land on the catwalk before it turns.

**Screen 24** - Use tank with bullets to destroy the sentry.

**Screen 25** - Gain access to the upper catwalk by using cyborg with the grapple. Next, use tank to shoot the sentry with bullets and torpedoes.

**Screen 26** - Use cyborg to jump the gap.

**Screen 27** - Quickly blast the sentry with torpedoes fired from tank. Take torpedo thrower power-up. Go back to **Screen 26**, drop down and move onto the next screen. Use torpedoes to blast the door open. Enter...

● **Gary Webb**

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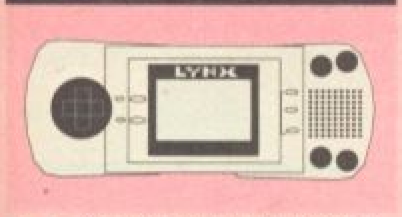
# ATARI LYNX



After a very slow start spreading the word and tough competition from Nintendo, the Lynx is finally beginning to become a front runner in the handheld wars. Atari has announced there will be another 30 games released this year and believes the machine will continue to command the lion's share of the colour portable games market in the USA and Europe.

There's no doubting the hardware superiority of the Lynx over Sega's new Gamegear - the lack of high-profile software is where both consoles fall short of many people's expectations. Who wants to play outdated games like *Rampage* or *Solitaire Poker*? Not me, that's for sure.

Thankfully, Atari and Sega are expanding their software range with increasingly exciting titles. As a result, Atari reckons there could be over 150,000 Lynx players in Britain alone by the beginning of next year. Sounds like we should all get together and start some sort of club. If you're already involved in such an endeavour get in touch with me at the usual ACE address and you may get some free publicity. What are you waiting for?

Bringing the off-beat humour of the cult time-travelling movie and American TV cartoon series, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* promises to be the most radical Lynx game so far! In order to rescue your bodacious babes from the grasp of some heavy duty geezers, you must take a trip in time and enlist the help of various historical dudes. Like the old Time Lord himself, you pilot a radical telephone booth to get to these time periods. *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* can be played by one or two people. Can you dig it, man?

The dawn of the droids is fast coming to Atari's handy games engine. Remember the classic Williams coin-op, *Robotron*? Third-party software developer Shadowsoft is attempting to recreate all the thrills and spills from this robo-blasting game.

The designers have spent a lot of effort trying to overcome the absence of two joysticks, a key feature of the original arcade machine. Should they get it right, players will become so engrossed in the game that they won't even notice *Robotron*'s primitive graphics. During play, you have to shoot screen-after-screen of bad guys while rescuing helpless humans from a robotic nightmare.

*Robotron* should be available as you read this and Shadowsoft has several other 'Lynx original' titles still in design. We hope to bring you a full review of *Robotron* next month. Don't forget ACE has reviewed the latest Lynx releases elsewhere in this issue.

What games system would be complete without a chess game in the software catalogue? As Software Toolworks supplied the rival Gameboy system with *Chess Master 2000*, Atari has asked another American company to pull no punches in the first Lynx chess game.

*Ultimate Chess Challenge* from Telegames is based on Fidelity Electronics' artificial intelligence software chess program which Atari says is 'the most sophisticated chess engine ever developed for any video game system'. Rapid move responses are among the many features incorporated into this complex program. Players can choose to play *Ultimate Chess Challenge* in either 2D or 3D graphics display modes - the two dimensional view gives you a top down look at the board instead of the perspective viewpoint found in the 3D mode.

The cart offers 17 levels of competition, including a masters level. You may be interested to note Fidelity Electronics' software is the only video game that the United States Chess Federation has honoured with a master's rating.

Terry Grantham, President of Telegames, maintains the Lynx is 'definitely on the leading edge' and plans to release two additional products for the world's first portable colour video game system. Keep your eyes peeled for *Krazy Ace Miniature Golf* and the Lynx conversion of Taito's *Qix* in the next few months.

### TAME THE GAME

Do you want to give *Ms. Pacman* the power to whiz around the screen at a superfast speed and easily avoid those nasty ghosties? Just start a game and put it into pause mode when you need to become a sneaky trickster. Then press the following sequence of buttons: A, A, B, Option 1, A, A, B and Option 1. A lightning bolt flashes on the top of the screen to confirm you're ready to go turbo with the push of button B. Happy rocketeering...

### P PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP P

Here are a few things to watch out for in *Ninja Gaiden* (one of the new Lynx games featured on page 68):

**LIFE PILLS** - these are scattered throughout the four areas of the game. Make sure you get 'em all.

**WALL JUMPS** - flip off the walls for surprise attacks.

**EXTRA LIVES** - it's always nice to find another life inside a box or phone booth!

● **Tony Montana**

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# GAMEBOY

Which addictive coin-operated video games prompted you to take regular trips to your local arcades in the early '80s? The design staff at Accolade must have been hooked on *Asteroids* and *Missile Command* because they're currently working on Gameboy adaptions of these two classic games. Both titles should maintain the features of the original games while taking full advantage of the Gameboy's stereo sound capabilities. In case you're too young to remember them, here's a brief recap of these blockbusters.

*Asteroids* hit the arcade halls roughly ten years ago and introduced the first video game spacecraft that could be rocketed through space in all directions and physically wrap-around the screen. It also featured 'Hyperwarp' giving you the ability to quickly surge the spacecraft away from serious trouble. In *Asteroids* points are scored by destroying the asteroid boulders as well as sinister alien satellites and flying saucers that make their way into the belt. The Gameboy version is enhanced by three modes of play: one player against the computer, two players cooperating with Gameboy's linked together for a common goal and score, or two players competing against each other.

Even before President Ronnie Reagan appeared on American TV talking about his SDI 'Star Wars' defence project, gameplayers were protecting their nation's cities against vicious attacks in *Missile Command*. During the game, you must make split-second decisions in desperate attempt to ward off enemy nuclear warheads raining down from the sky.

In the latest adaption of *Missile Command*, one player can compete against the computer or two players can link-up to see who can last the longest. Each new level in the game is represented by a skyline from one of the world's major cities. Additionally, you can scroll the skyline sideways for more interesting and varied scenery.

*Asteroids* and *Missile Command* on the Gameboy are scheduled for release in time for Christmas so start saving those pesky 5p coins. I'm already crossing my fingers, hoping Accolade will convert my all-time favourite video game, *Defender*.

One of Japan's best loved Nintendo titles, *Adventure Island*, is coming to the Gameboy. Before you get too excited, this action adventure isn't going to be released until spring 1992. Hudsonsoft, better known for its PC Engine games like *R-Type* and *Gunhed*, sold in excess of one million copies of the first *Adventure Island* game. The Gameboy adaption will supposedly incorporate several features not found in previous NES versions - though a spokesperson for the company wasn't willing to comment any further at this premature stage. I'll try to keep you informed.

Thanks to game like *Duck Tales* and *Chip 'n Dale Rescue Rangers*, Capcom is getting really friendly with Walt Disney. The next Gameboy release brings Disney's lovable Roger Rabbit cartoon character to the small screen. Inspired by the successful motion picture *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, the game is a mystery-solving adventure with you taking the role of the crazy 'toon'.

Roger's beautiful wife Jessica has been kidnapped by the evil Judge Doom. To help find Jessica, Roger enlists the help of a private detective and decides he must catch Doom's five henchweasels in criminal acts and force them to cooperate in the mission to rescue his beloved wife. Thus the scene is set for a six-stage missions taking in the sights of the wacky Toontown.

Roger can talk to witnesses of alleged crimes and other characters. He also has the capability to hide behind objects, attack with his punching hammer and arrest guilty parties. In addition, he has the option to evade fight and chase scenes in order to devote all his attention to solving puzzles and mysteries and gathering physical evidence.

The movie may have bombed in the USA, but this hasn't damped Sony Imagesoft's enthusiasm for its impending Gameboy product based around *Hudson Hawk*.

Some cruel critics have compared this motion picture - staring Bruce Willis of *Die Hard* fame - to *Ishtar*, one of the biggest film flops during the 1980s. Apparently Tri-Star, part of Sony's Columbia Pictures Entertainment empire, spent over $45 million producing *Hudson Hawk*. Movies sure are getting expensive to make, what about the whopping $100 million spent on *Terminator 2*?

As *Hudson Hawk*, the world's coolest cat burglar, you must make your way through three levels of action, puzzles and traps, while attempting to steal some valuable artifacts. Ocean has developed the game for Sony Imagesoft.

*Hudson Hawk* should be playing in popcorn palaces across Britain as you read this, with the Gameboy software to follow later in the year.

● **Masato Tanaka**

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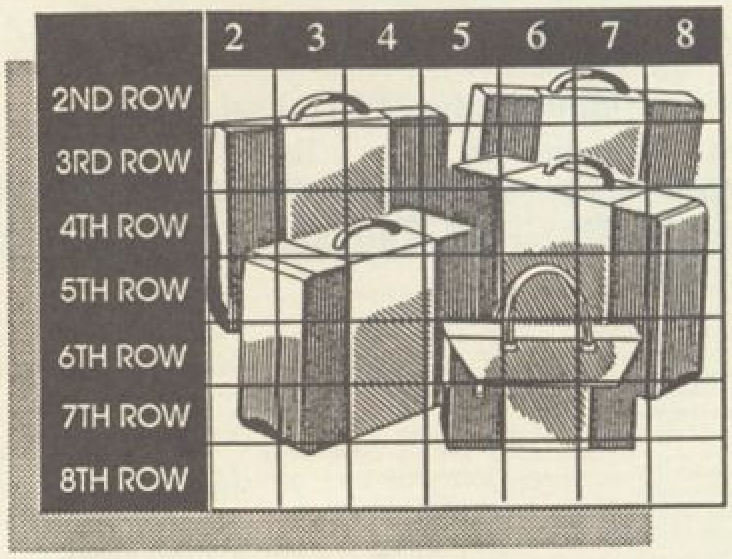

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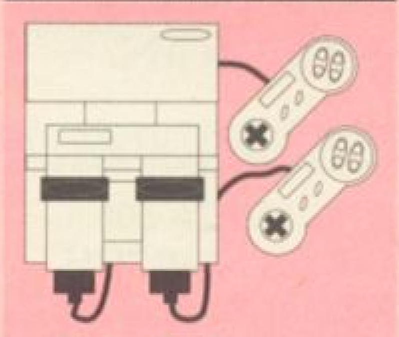
# SUPER FAMICOM



So the redesigned Super NES has been unveiled in North America and Philips/Nintendo are working together on CD-ROM/XA hardware and software for the system. Surely the next step is a soon-as-possible European launch of the Super Famicom?

Many pundits believe British gamers will have to wait until early 1993 before they can enjoy the likes of *Super Mario World* and *F-Zero*. Sega will probably clean-up with the Megadrive if Nintendo does take this long to make such a move. Sega's beast is sporting superb games these days like *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Castle of Illusion* and *Fantasia*. Additionally, the firm is releasing a CD-ROM device (see news pages for more details) probably making the Megadrive an even more attractive purchase. Nintendo should act now before it's just too late. Don't you agree?

With Nintendo of America expecting to sell two million Super NES consoles this year – over 1.5 million units have already been sold in Japan – leading publisher Konami is aiming to cash-in on the success with 'cutting-edge' video games like *Gradius III*, *Castlevania IV* and *The Legend of the Mystical Ninja*.

"Super NES opens up another market for experienced players who demand the highest quality graphics, sound and gameplay," says Emil Heidkamp, Senior Vice President of Konami in the USA. "We're ready with exciting games to challenge their skills."

*Castlevania IV*, an all-new adventure in the mega-hit series, is split into eleven haunting stages as Dracula returns to terrorise the Belmont family. *The Legend of Mystical Ninja* features two new characters created by Konami. Players battle white dragons, compete in amusement park carnival games and ride psychedelic tigers through the jungle. Like most console video games developed in Japan, you have to rescue a beautiful princess. Just for once I'd like to see the princess kick some Ninja ass. Know what I mean?

After playing an early version of Capcom's *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* at a recent trade show in Tokyo, I was, er, utterly gob-smacked as you like to say over there. For once, this really appears to be a coin-op conversion every bit as good as the original. Capcom's clever coders in Osaka have replicated the graphics and sound exactly, and are also attempting to improve the gameplay and add extra elements and features. Sadly, they've sworn me to secrecy until the game has been released. Suffice to say, *Super Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is definitely one to watch out for.

*Smash TV* is another sexy coin-op conversion making its way onto the Super NES. This Williams arcade-game was voted The Most Innovative Game of 1990 by the Amusement and Music Operators Association in the USA, and Acclaim is confident that fans won't be disappointed when they play the faithful Nintendo translation. I spoke to a video artist from Williams Bally/Midway and he seemed very impressed with Acclaim's efforts so far.

In case you haven't played *Smash TV*, here's a brief run-down of what you have to do in the game. Armed with grenades, lasers, smart bombs and force fields, players battle drones, mutants and other futuristic enemies through a seemingly endless number of competition rooms. Action takes place before a live studio audience whose life-like cheers and shouts heighten the drama. This is a game show where the ultimate prize is your life.

One of the innovative features in *Smash TV* on the Super NES is the double-controller option which allows one-player to use both joypads simultaneously - one moves the contestant while the other controls the direction of fire.

At least Acclaim is willing to take a few risks with its Super NES games, unlike many other software publishers who were showing their wares at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago last month. Many of these games were just plain crap, as I'm sure you'll see over the coming months. These companies must learn they can't produce good quality product in a matter of weeks. If you're thinking of producing Super NES games, please take the time and stop the crime.

## TAME THE GAME

Have you got any hints or cheats for the wondrous wittle wascal known as the Super Famicom in my neck of the woods? ACE is looking for unpublished tips to *Super Mario World*, *F-Zero*, *Pilot Wings*, *Gradius III* and *Final Fight*. Send your stuff into us at the normal address and claim your fifteen seconds of fame.

● Toshiyuki Kawakita

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# HOT OFF THE SHELF

**That's just typical - you decide to allow console games into the *Hot Off The Shelf* elite selection and all of a sudden all the good console games dry up! Thank goodness for *Sonic* - it'll be nice to see a new console face in these lists.**

**As usual, the selection has been fully updated to cover all the top games from the last three months plus a smattering of classics!**

### BATTLE CHESS 2

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £29.99

Sequel-itis spreads from Hollywood to the computer industry! This time round the rules are based on the Chinese variant of Chess, which introduces some new moves, has a river bisecting the board (which some pieces can't cross) and limits the King's movement to an 'Imperial Palace'. As before the board is viewed in 3D, with all the pieces 'taking' each other in a variety of amusing and well-animated ways. While a bit slow and irritating running from floppies due to all the disc swapping , a hard disc shows the game to be far faster and more lethal than normal Chess. A game that should keep even the most jaded Chess fan happy, and provide a pleasant change for the more casual Chess player.

**★ ACE RATING 895 ON IBM PC**

### BOULDERDASH

Victor Musical Industries ● Gameboy ¥3400 (Import)

Yet another steal from the aging C64's catalogue of great games. Hey kids, remember this? Guide cute and cuddly Rockford around umpteen (that's journo-speak for more than can be counted on one hand) mazes of boulders and meanies in pursuit of diamonds. But bear in mind that digging around boulders can make them tumble down on your head! An arcade puzzle game of the most addictive kind and yet another game ideally suited to Nintendo's B&W handheld wonder.

**★ ACE RATING 908 ON GAMEBOY**

### BRAT

Imageworks ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

Where *Lemmings* lead the way, others now follow - and why not as long as the games are as good as *Brat*? Little Nathan, the World's naughtiest nappy-wearing nipper, wanders around various vertically-scrolling levels. Unfortunately he's a little stupid, and will happily walk off the edge of cliffs and into traps and monsters - unless you guide him otherwise by placing direction changing icons in his path. Those who are deft with the mouse can guide Nathan into the coins and toys littering the landscape for bonus points. A magic mix of cuteness and craftiness, *Brat* will have you playing into the small hours.

**★ ACE RATING 850 ON AMIGA**

### CHUCK ROCK

Core Design ● Atari ST £24.95 ● Amiga £24.95

Unga-bunga! Poor Chuck Rock's spouse has been kidnapped by the fiendish Gary Gritter and is now held prisoner at the end of five massive levels of platform-pouncing, rock-throwing, belly-butting pandemonium. Graphically, *Chuck* is a real treat, with some hilariously animated dinosaurs and very slick 32-colour arcade-quality parallax scrolling. Although. when all is said and done, a fairly basic platform game, the varied backdrops, rapid pace, novel attack modes and humourous setting ensures that boredom won't set in.

**★ ACE RATING 886 ON AMIGA**

### COHORT

Impressions ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £29.99

Wargames tend to fall between two stools, being too simple to satisfy the ardent fan and too tough to attract the uninitiated. *Cohort,* happily, manages to be all things to all people. The strategic and tactical sides of the game are rigorously realistic, yet the icon driven mode of interaction make it instantly accessible. Add some superb visuals and atmospheric sound FX (thundering hooves, clashing swords, screams of the dying, etc) and you have a fine game that will keep any would-be Caesar happy for months.

**★ ACE RATING 890 ON AMIGA**

### FLAMES OF FREEDOM: MIDWINTER 2

Microprose ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● IBM PC £TBA

Now this is a challenge; how do you sum up a huge game like *FoF*? The big thaw has set in, and Midwinter is now Agora, the island HQ of the Atlantic Federation. You play one of their crack agents with the task of scuppering an impending attack by the evil Saharan Empire. The majority of the game takes place in a massive solid-3D world, with your spy able to use any mode of transport he/she may come across, everything from on-foot to helicopter. But this is no shoot-'em-up. There's more than enough strategy and subterfuge to keep any non-arcade fan happy. A major contender for game of the year - already!

**★ ACE RATING 950 ON ATARI ST**

### 4D SPORTS BOXING

Mindscape ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● PC £24.99

This violent clash between two solid-polygon generated pugilists is the best rendition of the 'noble art' yet seen on a home computer. The use of polygons allows the action to be viewed from absolutely any angle, and a video playback option allows you to watch that decisive upper-cut again and again. Highly realistic, some great polygonated expressions of anguish on the fighter's faces, a huge range of moves and a lot of work to be put in if you're to become World Champ!

**★ ACE RATING 900 ON IBM PC**

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**GODS**
Renegade ● Amiga £25.53 ● Atari ST £25.53 ● PC £TBA
Renegade crash onto the game's scene with this, their first release - and what a corker it is too! Set in Ancient Greece, the player controls a hunky warrior who must be guided through four levels of platforms, monsters and puzzles to a face-off with Something Very Nasty in the Underworld. Okay, so Renegade win no prizes for the written-by-computer plot but the implementation is something else - superb graphics, intelligent aliens (and they are smart, too!) and bags of clever surprises and secret bonuses to discover. It seems that the Bitmaps can do no wrong. Roll on *Magic Pockets*.
**★ ACE RATING 908 ON AMIGA**

**HEART OF CHINA**
Dynamix/Sierra ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £40.85
Set in the 1920s Asia, you play 'Lucky' Jake Masters, a down-on-his-luck pilot who's started turning to the bottle for solace. Desperate for money you accept the job of finding the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy businessman, a task that takes you deep into the heart of revolutionary China... It all adds up to a rip-roaring adventure through the East, featuring an exciting plot, the ability to switch between characters, apt arcade sequences, some gorgeous VGA graphics and highly atmospheric soundtracks. Every Dynamix release improves on the last, and *Heart of China* is no exception. An essential purchase for your PC.
**★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC**

**JETFIGHTER II**
Velocity/US Gold ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £39.99
Designed by Bob Dinnerman (of *F/A-18 Interceptor* fame), this is arguably the best flight sim on PC. Boasting a huge 125 missions and some state-of-the-art 3D, the accent is firmly on playability rather than rigorous technical accuracy. One of the cleverest features is the Adventure, in which you play a deadly game of tactical Chess with an enemy invasion force, first flying an attack mission then defending against the enemy's counter-attack, with the aim of driving the enemy forces back and eventually out of America.
**★ ACE RATING 935 ON IBM PC**

**KILLING CLOUD**
Mirrorsoft ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99
San Francisco, 1997. (By the way, have you noticed how many games are set in 1997? Why the bad reputation?) The city has been enveloped by a thick poisonous smog, causing untold chaos and leaving the populace at the mercy of psychotic criminal cults. As one of the last-surviving officers in the SFPD, its your job to try and restore law and order. The game takes the form of missions, where you must try and fly you hover-bike into the city (suitably protected, of course) and try to arrest criminals and so forth. Exciting street-level action depicted in smooth 3D and a highly atmospheric plot combine in a superb game that should please any would-be gang buster.
**★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA**

**LEMMINGS**
Psygnosis ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99 ● PC £24.99
In an age of ever-faster vector graphics and smoother parallax scrolls, Psygnosis was the last company expected to release a simple-looking game based on the suicidal tendencies of some cutesy little rodents. The object of the game is beautifully straightforward - you must guide a certain number of randomly-meandering lemmings to safety from one end of a peril-strewn level to the other.. You can endow chosen lemmings with a range of special abilities, such as climb or dig, with which you can get them past traps and obstacles. Incredibly playable and addictive, it's a game that will hopefully encourage programmers to spend as much time on a game's gameplay as its graphics.
**★ ACE RATING 910 ON AMIGA**

**LOGICAL**
Rainbow Arts ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99
Will this game make you lose your marbles? This latest addition to the ranks of arcade puzzlers presents the player with a 'board' made up of gulleys and rotatable dials. Marbles roll down the gulleys and can be slotted into one of four slots in

each dial. The aim is to explode all the dials on the board by filling all four dial slots with marbles of the same colour. It all starts of easily enough, but later levels feature complications and restrictions far too bizarre to go into in the small space available here. As the ageing cliché goes, infuriatingly addictive.

**★ ACE RATING 895 ON ATARI ST**

### PIPE DREAM

El/Lucasfilm ● Gameboy £25 (Import)

Most readers will probably be more familiar with this game under its original title of *Pipemania*. All the action takes place on a 10 x 7 grid. Using a cursor you have to drop varying sections of piping onto the grid, with the aim of making a pipeline for 'flooz' to flow down. Should the flooz leak before it has passed through a set number of pipe sections then it's game over. Later levels introduce directional pipes (the flooz MUST flow a certain way) and obstacles. Infuriatingly addicitive - it's the sort of game the Gameboy was designed for.

**★ ACE RATING 910 ON GAMEBOY**

### POWERMONGER

Electronic Arts ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99

A new computer classic, with the highest ACE rating ever. You play a warlord, exiled from your homeland along with twenty followers, who has just landed on the shores of 200 islands, ripe for conquering. Unfortunately the current residents are not quite so keen on your enforced leadership, and will do all they can to resist you. Using a similar viewpoint to *Populous*, the landscape is here polygon-based and thus can be manipulated in just about any way you require. The excellent visuals are supported by highly atmospheric sound. All control is by mouse, and couldn't be easier. To play it is to worship it. An absolutely essential buy.

**★ ACE RATING 973 ON AMIGA**

### PRINCE OF PERSIA

Broderbund/Domark ● Amiga £24.99 ● Atari ST £24.99 ● IBM PC £24.99

A game that could so easily go unnoticed and unloved by the shelf-scouring hordes looking for the latest licence. The graphics, when static, are fairly unimpressive (although they do get better on the later levels), but when they move... The animation as you guide a young Prince through umpteen levels of platforms, pits, spikes and swordsmen is quite excellent and life-like. And the gameplay, although it may sound uninspired, is as good as the graphics. Some of the action has a real *Indy*-style cliff-hanger aspect to it. Miss this and you'll be crying for weeks!

**★ ACE RATING 915 ON AMIGA**

### R-TYPE

IREM ● Gameboy £24.99 (Import)

In one fell swoop, this conversion of the classic coin-op snatches the crown of Top Gameboy Shoot-'Em-Up from *Nemesis*. All your old favourites are here: The Force; beam weapon power-up; Giger-esque end-of-level aliens; frantic actions; sweaty palm excitement. How do the programmers manage to pack so much into such a small package? Only IREM have the answer! If there's one niggling fault it's the warbling soundtrack, which cuts out annoyingly everytime a sound effect is played.

**★ ACE RATING 820 ON GAMEBOY**

### SAVAGE EMPIRE

Origin/Mindscape ● PC £34.99 ● Amiga £TBA

Using the *Ultima VI* interface, Origin have taken a side-step from the medieval world of their previous games, and now plunge you into a nightmare scenario where you control a party of characters mysteriously transported to a dinosaur-infested Lost World. A good yarn well told and - hard to believe I know - actually *better* than *Ultima VI*.

**★ ACE RATING 955 ON IBM PC**

### THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Lucasfilm/US Gold ● Amiga £25.99 ● Atari ST £25.99 ● IBM PC £25.99

*Monkey Island* is the latest in the series of animated graphic adventures pioneered by Sierra but now proving a nice little earner for Lucasfilm. You play Guybrush Threepwood whose ambition is to become a fully-fledged pirate. This entails a lengthy (30 hours is Lucasfilm's

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estimate) quest through a world populated by scurvy knaves and assorted cut-throats. Game interaction is made easy-as-pie by the simple point-'n'-click control. By turns both tense and funny, the absorbing atmosphere is only slightly marred by the overuse of the '™' symbol.

**★ ACE RATING 922 ON AMIGA**

### STRIDER

Sega/Virgin ● Megadrive £39.95

This coin-op conversion was reviewed some time ago on home computer. Thankfully, the Megadrive incarnation is supremely superior - if you didn't know better you'd swear you were playing the arcade machine. Strider Hiryu has to jump and tumble through levels of arcade-perfect action. Stunning for its graphics, sound and gameplay, *Strider* is a must-buy for any Megadrive owner.

**★ ACE RATING 919 ON SEGA MD**

### SUPER MARIOLAND

Nintendo ● Super Famicom (inc. with grey-import console)

Could this be the best platform game available? The game follows the seemingly never-ending adventures of Mario, as he jumps and joy-rides his way through 99 sub-levels of platform action. What makes the game so special - apart from its superlative graphics, stunning sound FX and super-satisfying control - is the never-ending variety in the gameplay; it's not all just running and jumping. Complete this and you can consider yourself a real games supremo.

**★ ACE RATING 910 ON FAMICOM**

### SPACE QUEST IV

Sierra On-Line ● Atari ST £TBA ● Amiga £TBA ● IBM PC £34.99

Top-Quality goofball space adventure with lots of humour and minimal dithering around. Sierra have managed to combine excellent graphics and a bizarre-yet-comprehendable time-travelling story line. Guide Roger Wilco through a roller-coaster adventure involving absolutely no typing and some excellent puzzle-design. Every location contains a surprise! Not too good if you own a slow PC, and is virtually unworkable from floppies. Otherwise, a pretty essential purchase if you can put up with the constant craziness.

**★ ACE RATING 880 ON IBM PC**

### SWITCHBLADE 2

Gremlin ● Atari ST £24.99 ● Amiga £24.99

At last! A game to make the 16-bit console owners realise that they haven't got the monopoly on slick graphics and superb gameplay. Although a sequel, the game bears few similarities to its predecessor. The inspirations from the *Strider* coin-op are obvious: guide Hiro through level after level of baddy-laden mayhem, collecting varied (and wonderfully depicted) power-ups to help in the quest. Admittedly, there's very little here that you haven't seen before, but rarely has it been done so slickly.

**★ ACE RATING 900 ON AMIGA**

### WING COMMANDER

Origin/Mindscape ● Amiga £TBA ● PC £34.99

Another 3D space combat game, but radically uses of stunning ray-traced and digitised graphics for the spaceships. They rotate, shrink and grow with amazing speed and fluidity. Animated scenes punctuate the action and present the first true cinematic experience on a home computer. The multitude of missions mean this isn't a game of surface gloss. Sadly only best appreciated on the high speed PC.

**★ ACE RATING 949 ON IBM PC**

### WONDERLAND

Magnetic Scrolls ● Amiga £29.99 ● Atari ST £29.99 ● PC £34.99

The Scrolls, having stunned the world with *The Pawn* way back in 1987, return with a new classic. An adventure game based on the famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*, the plot follows the book enough to retain its weird flavour but not so slavishly as to make it solvable by simply knowing the story. The lavish text, teeming with hundreds of tough (but logical) puzzles, is accompanied by a number of stunning animated graphic scenes. The future of adventure games is here. An essential buy.

**★ ACE RATING 910 ON IBM PC**

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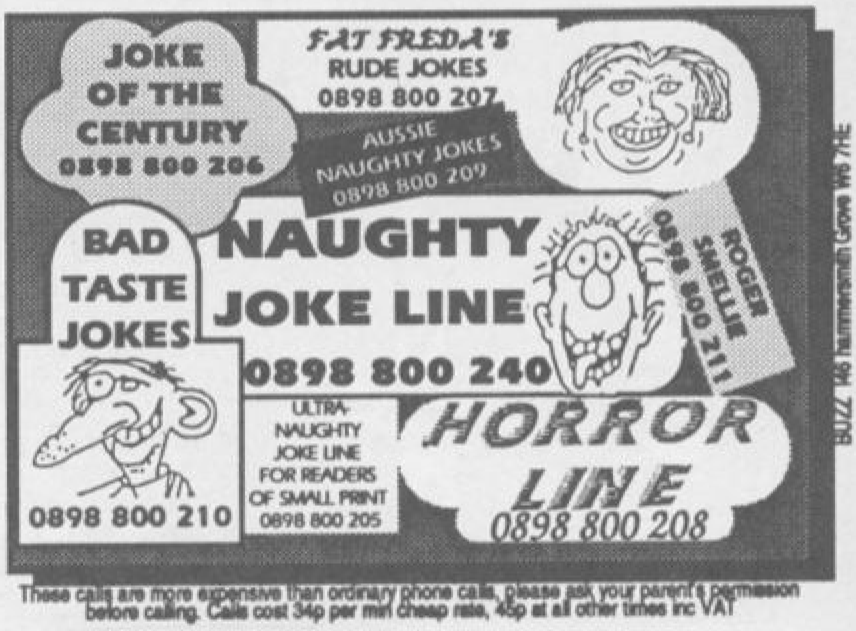
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06

# ACE CROSSWORD

**Our monthly prize word puzzler, set by the inimitable MIPS**

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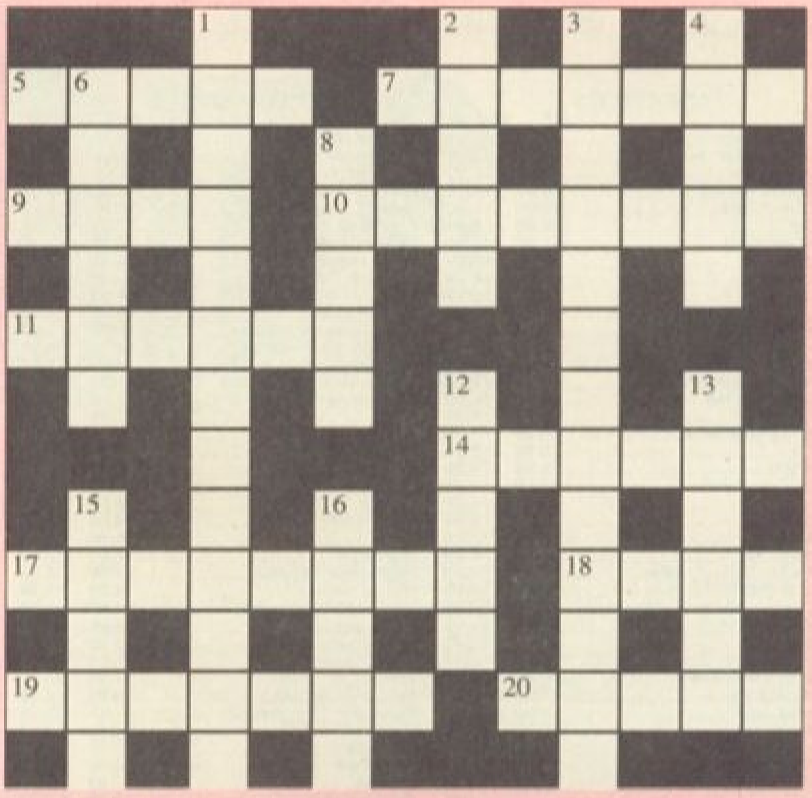
If you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat, you'll get a free game for your machine. We regret that we cannot specify exact titles, but we'll do our utmost to ensure that the prizes get your adrenalin pumping. Don't forget to specify your machine format!



## CLUES ACROSS

5 Wes played at US Gold game (5)
7 Gave Roy version of Ocean game (7)
9 Handy striker from Firebird (4)
10 They're driven to suicide by Psygnosis game (8)
11 Movement of moon holding it back (6)
14 Looking embarrassed, went ahead with Starlight game (3,3)
17 Where one might be held captive by Infogrames (8)
18 Therefore gore gets spilt (4)
19 Remain puzzled about Virgin's first software house (7)
20 Film director Oliver seen in Little Rock (5)

## CLUES DOWN

1 Apt act in plane crash game (7,6)
2 Storming Norman's girl (5)
3 Electronic Arts game ad I, Martin, tore in pieces (5,8)
4 Join sin summer get together (5)
6 Game from software house in London or Helsinki, initially (6)
8 Identical copy of lap-top in geometric solid form (5)
12 It's mad to cry about first and last letters (5)
13 Figure gent has not time for software house (6)
15 Al gets nothing back and is exhausted (3,2)
16 Verdi performance needed for disk! (5)

### HOW TO ENTER

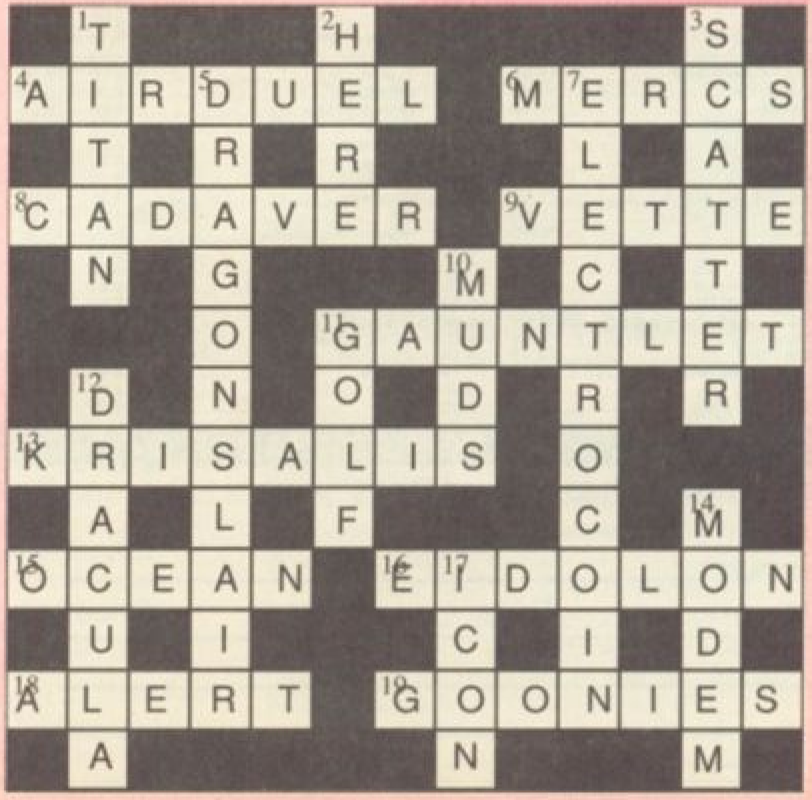
Every month we offer a free game worth up to £25 for your machine if you're the sender of the first correct crossword solution out of the hat. The address to send your solution to is:

ACE August 91 Crossword,
Priory Court
Farringdon Lane
London
EC1R 3AU

The deadline for entries is always the 1ST OF THE MONTH MENTIONED ON THE COVER – Thursday August 1st 1991.

### JUNE 91 RESULT

Winner of the April crossword was Richard Ingham of Tranent. One hot softie is on its way, Dick... July result announced next month.



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| | T | | R | | R | | | | L | | A | |
| 8 C | A | D | A | V | E | R | | 9 V | E | T | T | E |
| | N | | G | | | | 10 M | | C | | T | |
| | | | O | | 11 G | A | U | N | T | L | E | T |
| | 12 D | | N | | O | | D | | R | | R | |
| 13 K | R | I | S | A | L | I | S | | O | | | |
| | A | | L | | F | | | | C | | 14 M | |
| 15 O | C | E | A | N | | 16 E | 17 I | D | O | L | O | N |
| | U | | I | | | | C | | I | | D | |
| 18 A | L | E | R | T | | 19 G | O | O | N | I | E | S |
| | A | | | | | | N | | | | M | |

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# FREEBIES

**Pat Winstanley checks out public domain play power including an apparently unauthorised version of PacMan...**

After scraping the barrel for review software last month, a good number of PD libraries have come up trumps over the past few weeks. Far too much has arrived for everything to get a mention at once so over the next few months I'll be bringing you the best of the bunch - and telling you what to avoid too.

Having now installed a KCS Powerboard in my Amiga I can review PC disks in addition to coming to grips with MS-DOS. If you are thinking of adding an emulator, everything reviewed here for the PC runs on a very basic CGA set-up. Let me know if there's anything you'd like me to check out for you. And libraries, send me your latest and best for ST, Amiga and PC - the publicity really works when you have a mention in ACE.

## TOUCHSTONES

***Amiga – £3.50 – Licenseware***

**AMOS PD Library (LPD18)**

I was told this game is based on Ishido (whatever that is) and approached it with extreme caution - not ANOTHER rendering of Go? Well yes and no; it is one of those infuriating games which take around five minutes to learn and 500 years to master.

You are presented with a 12 by 8 grid and a pile of stones each bearing various coloured patterns. The idea of the game is to place stones in the grid so that a match of either colour or design is made with the adjacent horizontal or vertical occupant. For each match made a point is scored so, as with Scrabble, it makes sense to fill in gaps both to frustrate your opponent and acquire multiple scores.

It sounds easy but believe me it's not. Various options are available such as solo play, one against the computer, several players and so on, and the whole shebang is mouse driven and extremely user friendly. If this type of game appeals to you then buy it now.

### ACE FREEBIES WORKS!

**ACE knows this column actually results in more sales for participating libraries - at least one has had to be rescued from under the deluge of extra mail. So why, we wonder, do we have to put so much effort into locating suitable software? If you're running a library and want to boost your business, phone Steve Cooke on 071 251 6222 for information about editorial coverage in this section.**

## CLEAR

***Amiga – PD***

**Amiganuts DISKNO:1077**

Still on the puzzle theme I've become totally addicted to this game which again presents a grid, but this time all the tiles are in place and the idea is to get rid of them.

Each row or column can be slid horizontally or vertically as a whole, the idea being to make rows of identical symbols. When you have a row of two or more they can be removed from the board. Only a limited number of moves are allowed and there is a time limit too. In addition the board contains tiles showing a hand. If two of these land up next to each other, movement of the the rows and columns they occupy is disabled.

So far I'm totally flummoxed on level 5 but I'm sure there's an obvious solution .... if only I could find it! I couldn't find out the price either – contacting the company isn't that easy, but the game's good enough to warrant the effort.

## DARK WARS

***ST – £2.95 – Budgie Licenseware***

**ST Adventurers PD Library**

For those of you who enjoyed Dungeon master and would like more of the same, this game is a bit wobbly but still a very good RPG.

It has a DM/Bards Tale type screen with full mouse control. All possible actions such as get, drop, examine, plead etc. are listed in a box; simply click on the one you want. Graphics are restricted to a 2"x2" box in the top left of the screen and are a little vague but perfectly adequate. Physical combat, magic spells, potions, food and drink are all included and the game promises to be varied and enjoyable.

My only gripe so far is the imprecise mouse control. Moving around is accomplished by clicking on a direction arrow while for commands the word must be clicked. This is where the wobble comes in as very precise pointer control is called for. Unfortunately there doesn't seem to be any keyboard alternative which is a great shame. Programmers please note – some people find the mouse too slow in this type of game (particularly seasoned text adventurers).

## CRYPTOGRAMS

***PC – £4.00 – shareware***

**Fantasia Shareware (GAM-093)**

If you have ever fancied yourself as a secret agent you'll know how important coded messages are in the espionage game. Here is a program which will give you plenty of training in the art.

The task entails working out letter substitutions in order to translate a scrambled sentence. Initially you need to have a look at letter distribution – for instance the most common letter in the English language is 'e'. Then it's a matter of guessing likely contenders for one, two and three letter words.

Several puzzles are included on the disk, some already partially completed to give you a start. Again, this is a disk I will be going back to in leisure hours as a pleasant change from crosswords.

### SHAMELESS PLUGS!

Software supplied by:

**AMOS PDL** – 0942 495261 (Amiga) 25 Park Road Wigan WN6 7AA

**Amiganuts United** – 0703 785680 (Amiga) 169 Dale Valley Road Hollybrook Southampton SO1 6QX

**Adventurers PDL** – 0785 44227 (ST) 32 Merrivale Road Rising Brook Stafford ST17 9EB

**Fantasia Shareware** – 0761 221585 (PC/Mac) PO Box 1254 Compton Martin Bristol BS18 6JX

**Goodman Enterprise** – 0782 335650 (ST) 16 Conrad Close Meir Hay Estate Longton Stoke-on-Trent ST3 1SW1

## PACMAN ST

**ST – £2.95 – Budgie Licenseware**

**Goodmans PDL (GBU-70)**

If you (like me) became hooked on Pacman on arcade machines, more years ago than you care to remember, then you'll love this offering from Budgie. Race around the maze gobble power pills and avoid the meanies. Old classics like this are rarely found now in the shops so if Pacman is missing from your collection this version is well worth acquiring.

I'm not too sure about copyright implications since this game appears to be a faithful rendering of the original commercial title. Several libraries have had problems in this respect recently – most notably over a version of Scrabble.

## DISTRIBUTION RULES

- Public Domain – freely copyable – no fee payable.
- Shareware – freely copyable – fee payable to author for continued use, manuals, help and software updates.
- Licenseware – not distributable except by authorised libraries – fee to author included in distributor's copying charge.

Most disks have 'read.me' files or similar giving information about the class into which the contents fall. Please support programmers by keeping both the spirit and letter of the rules. All programs mentioned in this column are PD, shareware or Licenseware to the best of my knowledge. If you know differently please get in touch.

# HOW TO PLACE YOUR ENTRY

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- Entries which could be interpreted as encouraging software piracy will not be accepted

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# ACE DIARY

## JUNE 1991

### 7-13 July SOFTWARE RELEASES

- Ozark Softscape/Microprose: *Command HQ* (PC £TBA). All-embracing wargame/simulation. Take on World Wars I, II or future wars, either against the computer or using the two-player option. Roland and Ad-Lib soundboard compatible.
- Gremlin: *Hero Quest* expansion packs (ST, Amiga £25.99).
- Domark: *Thunderjaws* (ST, Amiga £24.99, PC £29.99). Underwater mayhem with mutant sharks and the like in Tengen coin-op conversion.
- Spectrum Holobyte: *Flight of the Intruder* (ST, Amiga £30.99).
- *Image Works*: Bloodwych (PC £25.99). Virtually qualifying as a golden oldie, finally arrives on PC.
- Electronic Arts: *Battlechess 2* (Amiga £ 29.99). Graphically-led chess game where the pieces actually materialise and fight one another for possession of the squares.

**Sunday 7**
Tennis: final day at the Wimbledon championships.

**Monday 8**

**Tuesday 9**

**Wednesday 10**

**Thursday 11**
Anniversary of the Mongolian People's Revolution. Football: the draws take place today for the first round matches in next season's European club competitions.

**Friday 12**
Bank Holiday in Northern Ireland (Anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne) 1920: A Briton, Charles Stephens, died going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. International Music Show, Olympia, London (formerly the British Music Fair). Exhibition for computers and music open to the public today and tomorrow. (Contact number: 071-730 7852). 4th International 16-Bit Computer show opens at the Novotel in Hammersmith, London, and continues until Sunday. (Contact number for organisers: 081-549 3444.)

**Saturday 13**
Cricket: Benson & Hedges Cup Final (Lords)

### 14-20 July SOFTWARE RELEASES

- Domark: *Grandstand* (ST, Amiga £29.99). Sports compilation comprising *Gazza's Super Soccer, World Class Leaderboard, Pro Tennis Tour* and *Continental Circus.*
- Mindscape: *Wing Commander* (PC £39.99). Science fiction-style battles in space, with cinematic feel to gameplay and high quality graphics and sound (Roland or Ad-Lib compatible). *Das Boot* (ST £25.99). Submarine sim based on German U-boat in World War II.
- Microprose: *Railroad Tycoon* (ST £29.99). The game that made trainspotting fashionable: Sid Meier's absorbing rail-building simulation.
- Ocean: *Dark Man* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Game of the film.
- Electronic Arts: *Castles* (PC £29.99). Strategy, empire-building game set in mediaeval times. *Powermonger Clue Book* (£7.50). Hints, tips and tactics for Powermonger addicts.

**Sunday 14**
National Day, France (anniversary of the storming of the Bastille). Republic Day, Iraq Motor Racing: British Formula One Grand Prix takes place at Silverstone.

**Monday 15**
St Swithin's Day: according to the rhyme, the weather today will hold good (or bad) for the next forty days. The original St Swithin was Bishop of Winchester in 852; how he became associated with determining the weather isn't known.

**Tuesday 16**

**Wednesday 17**

**Thursday 18**
Golf: British Open Championship begins, at Royal Birkdale Golf Club. Anniversary of the opening of Disneyland, near Los Angeles, on this day in 1955.

**Friday 19**

**Saturday 20**
Independence Day, Colombia.

### 21-27 July SOFTWARE RELEASES

- Image Works: *Blade Warrior* (Amiga £25.99). Hack and slay in fantasy setting.
- Domark: *Virtual Worlds* (ST, Amiga, PC £29.99). Compilation of Incentive's Freescape games; includes *Castle Master, Driller, Total Eclipse* and the previously unreleased seuqel to *Castle Master, Crypt.*
- Mirror Image: *TV Sports Football* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Welcome rerun for Cinemaware's treatment of American Football. *Sky Chase* (ST, Amiga, PC £9.99). Early Image Works air combat simulation, developed by *Sim City* team Maxis.
- US Gold: *Mercs* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Scrolling shoot 'em up converted from Capcom coin-op.
- Microprose: *F15 Strike Eagle 2* scenario disk (PC £TBA). North Cape and Central Europe playing areas, plus Operation Desert Storm scenario to bring PC version bang up to date.
- Electronic Arts: *Battlechess* (CD-TV £TBA).

**Sunday 21**
National Day, Belgium. Tisha b'Av 1969: Astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man on the moon. As with Kennedy's assassination, most people alive at the time claim to remember where they were at the time...

**Monday 22**
National Day, Poland.

**Tuesday 23**
National Day, Ethiopia.

**Wednesday 24**

**Thursday 25**
Fourth Test Match, England vs West Indies at Edgbaston.

**Friday 26**
Independence Day, Liberia.

**Saturday 27**

### 28 July – 3rd August SOFTWARE RELEASES

- Mindscape: *Blue Max* (ST £30.64). Air combat in WWI. *Mega Fortress* (PC £36.76).
- Bitmap Brothers: *Cadaver - the Pay Off* (ST, Amiga £15.99). Four new levels for *Cadaver* aficionados - needs original *Cadaver* disk.
- Microprose: *Gunship 2000* (ST, Amiga, PC £34.99). Multi chopper combat sim.
- Mindcraft/Electronic Arts: *Magic Candle 2* (PC £29.99). FRPG – explore the dreaded domain of Gurtex (sounds like a raincoat manufacturer).

**Sunday 28**
National Independence Day, Peru. Motor Racing: German Formula One Grand Prix takes place at Hockenheim.

**Monday 29**

**Tuesday 30**
Geoff Hurst's hat-trick helped England beat West Germany 4-2 to win the World Cup on this day in 1966.

**Wednesday 31**

## AUGUST

**Thursday 1**
National Day, Switzerland.

**Friday 2**

**Saturday 3**

### 4 – 10 August SOFTWARE RELEASES

- US Gold: *Might and Magic III* (PC £29.99). *Gauntlet 3* (ST, Amiga £24.99). Latest episode with parallax scrolling, improved graphics.
- Mindscape: *4D Sports Driving* (ST, Amiga £29.99). High speed obstacle race.
- Ocean: *Wild Wheels* (ST, Amiga, PC £24.99). Motorised footie game in far future.
- Electronic Arts: *Earl Weaver Baseball* (PC £29.99).

**Sunday 4**

**Monday 5**
Bank Holiday in Scotland Anniversary of the death of Marilyn Monroe, 1962.

**Tuesday 6**

**Wednesday 7**
1923: German inflation rampant, with 15 million Deutschmarks to the pound, from 9 million the day before. No ERM in those days!

**Thursday 8**
Fifth Test Match, England vs West Indies, at The Oval.

**Friday 9**

**Saturday 10**

# THE BLITTER END

## TECHNOSEX OK

He used to play all night with ME! Hot action, fantasy games...you name it. Now he says his Neo Geo gives him more...'

That outrageous pitch is delivered by a scantily clad blonde with her presumed lover in the background in the latest Neo Geo ad. The headline reads 'I remember when he couldn't keep his hands off me!'. Said lover-boy is gripping a Neo Geo in the same way that Hendrix used to grip his guitar, while the monitor features what appears to be a hideously mutated organ.

You probably won't get as far as reading the text, because of course you'll be rushing off to buy a Neo Geo, but that's a pity because it has even more to offer the discerning reader. 'I scream, but he doesn't hear me above 15 channels of pure pulsating stereo sound with 7 dedicated to real voice speech!'. 'Other systems', apparently 'don't even come close...and lately neither does he.'

Apparently some other company (Nintendo, I think) is attempting to clean up in the console market by appealing to the 'family environment'. How naive.

*

Where can you meet Chris 'Balance of Power' Crawford, Brian 'Beyond Zork' Moriarty, Greg 'Mr CD' Riker and a host of other awesome interactive entertainment personalities? Answer: at the ACE Special Conference, being held at the ECES Show at Earls Court in September. ACE is gathering together eight of the hottest celebs from the far corners of the games world to address a favoured few at the show. Passes will cost £65 (for two days – eight sessions) or you can get a £15 ticket for admittance to a single session, which sounds rather costly until you remember that most professional conferences of this type cost at least £350 a go. If you're one of the people who organise such conferences and are wondering how we can possibly make money at this price, the answer is that we're not. ACE readers, however, will have an exclusive chance to get in even cheaper – for nothing, in fact, because we'll be running a special competition next month to give away 5 free passes. Since there will only be room for 100 attendees, the conference will almost certainly be heavily over subscribed, so for the more serious ACE reader we're also offering a priority booking service at the same time – so even if you can't get in free, you'll still have a chance of entry.

Meanwhile, the Earls Court Show is sounding like a 'must be there' occasion, with coverage by Radio One just announced and a host of 'circus performers' making an appearance. Not again, surely?

*

Following the news that Sega are thinking of buying Virgin Mastertronic, a host of rumours have been going round the industry. There is, however, no truth at all in the allegations that Ocean are trying to buy the Department of Transport (License Division), or that Psygnosis are sponsoring the Beastie Boys and doing a sports sim featuring the Barbarians. Electronic Arts have dropped their bid for Dulux Paint. Finally, Nintendo are making a desperate attempt to woo shareholders during their hostile takeover of a chain of Italian restaurants – they've now made an offer for Italy.

*

Following my loss of the BT number last month that allows you to make contact with the department which will sell you a CD phone directory for £2200, the company have kindly furnished this information. You should dial 0800 700 200.

*

And now, bad news department. Like thousands of others, you may have been thinking how nice it would be to get one of these Game Gear thingies because, come this Christmas, you'll be able to pop a TV tuner onto it and watch the Queen's Speech while sitting in the smallest room. Well, the bad news is that you'll need a TV license. If you've already got a TV license, you'll need another one if you plan to use the unit anywhere outside your home (other than at a holiday home) – or so a spokesperson for the TV licensing centre informed us. Apparently you need a license for any receiving device that is not SOLELY battery operated – and of course you can plug one of those power adaptor thingies into the Game Gear. A TV license will set you back a whopping £70 – we're talking colour, remember? Watch out for specially equipped detector vans pouncing on hapless high street juves in the near future.

***Blit Blit!***

### PICTURE THE SCENARIO

One well-known softco recently confessed that 'We only dream up the scenarios AFTER we've written the games...'. Which leads us into this month's mini-compo. In not more than 500 words (apart from that restriction, length is unimportant), write us a parody of a typical game scenario – it can be either sim, RPG, shoot-em-up, or space epic. You know the sort of thing – only too well, we suspect. Send it to 'Blitter' at the ACE address to arrive before August 20th. A red hot game to the one that makes us laugh the most.

### IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

**We've only got room here to hint at what you'll be rewarded with in the next issue of ACE, out on August 8th. Just make sure you're first in the queue!**

- **In depth analysis of Super R-Type on the Famicom – can this superlative title outplay Mario and get the title 'World's Hottest Game'?**
- **Tricks and tactics featuring Monkey Island, Space Quest IV, Gods, and Mario**
- **...And a host of surprises. Don't miss it!**

**Dear Newsagent,**

**We may not have met before, but I would like to introduce myself as a discerning games-player. Please reserve me a copy ACE magazine – the most authoritative coverage of the past, present and future of games technology. PS ACE is out on the 8th of every month.**

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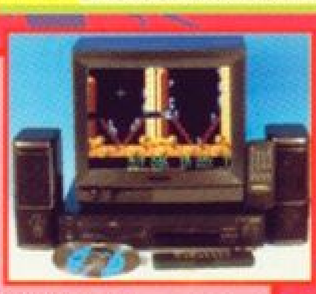

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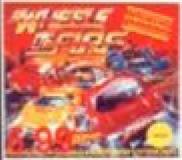

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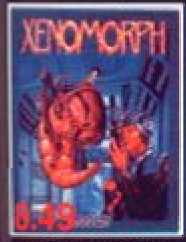

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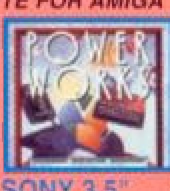

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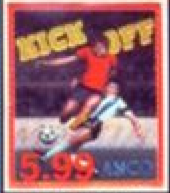

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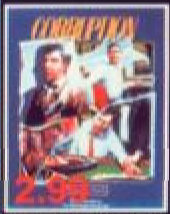

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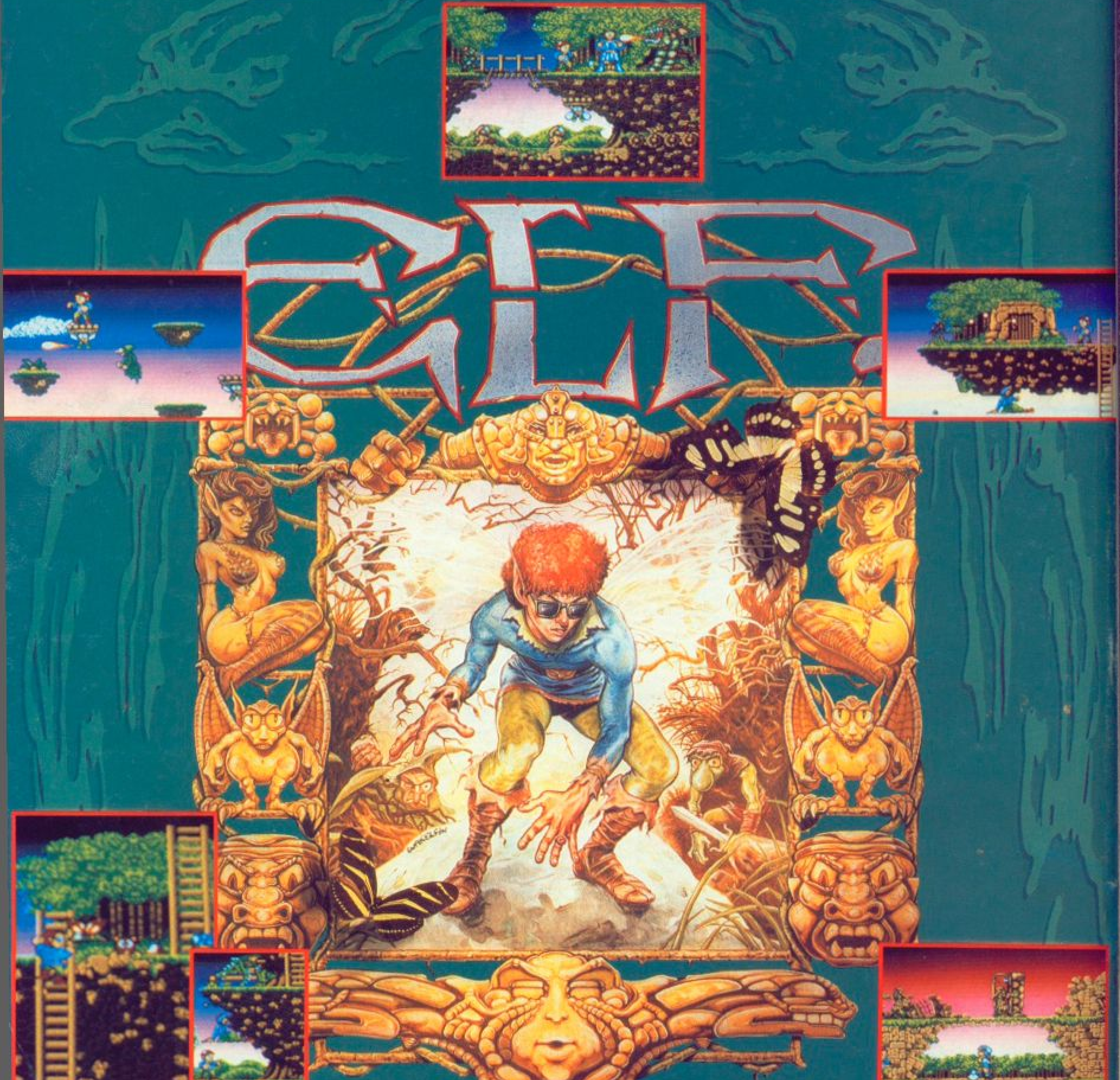

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